



## INSIDE TODAY

## U.S. NEWS

**N.J. to vote on death penalty**

By TOM HESTER Jr.  
Associated Press Writer

With New Jersey on the cusp of abolishing capital punishment, death penalty foes are hoping the move will inspire other states to do the same.

New Jersey lawmakers are poised to give final legislative approval on Thursday to a bill abolishing the death penalty, becoming the first state to do so since 1965 when Iowa and West Virginia abolished it.

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## WORLD NEWS

**EU leaders sign Treaty of Lisbon to reform bloc**

By Axel Bugge

European Union leaders signed the Treaty of Lisbon on Thursday to reform the bloc's institutions and give it stronger leadership, marking the end of a difficult process that has lasted nearly a decade.

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## SPORTS NEWS

**Clemens, Pettitte named in Mitchell report**

By RONALD BLUM

Seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens and Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte were the first names to emerge Thursday from the Mitchell report.

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**Climate change talks lurch into final day after Gore blasts US**

**Nobel Laureate and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore speaks at the side event of the UN Climate Change Conference 2007 in Nusa Dua, on Bali island, December 13, 2007. The European Union threatened on Thursday to boycott U.S. talks among top greenhouse gas emitting nations, accusing Washington of blocking goals for fighting climate change at U.N. talks in Bali.**

(Supri/Reuters)

by Shaun Tandon

Al Gore on Thursday delivered a rousing call for the world to fight against climate change without the United States, which he

accused of blocking tactics at the key UN conference in Bali.

Exhausted negotiators at the Indonesian resort island grappled over deadlocked text early Friday, just hours before the talks were scheduled to conclude.

But delegates questioned by AFP saw little hope of any early breakthrough on the biggest problem. To warm applause at a conference side event, Gore took the lash to the United States of President George W. Bush and demanded tough commitments to crack down on the greenhouse-gas emissions that drive global warming. Gore, who narrowly lost to Bush in 2000, told the packed conference room that he was no longer in office and "not bound by diplomatic niceties."

"So I am going to speak an inconvenient truth," said Gore, referring to the climate film that won him an Oscar.

"My own country, the United States is principally responsible for obstructing progress here in Bali. We all know that," he said to loud cheers.

"But my country is not the only one that can take steps to ensure that we move forward from Bali

with progress and with hope."

Environment ministers or their stand-ins from more than 180 countries have until Friday to agree a framework for tackling global warming past 2012, when pledges under the Kyoto Protocol, boycotted by Bush, expire.

Hailing growing local efforts in the United States to fight global

warming, the newly minted 2007 Nobel peace laureate urged the conference to be hopeful that the next president who succeeds Bush in 2009 will take action.

"You can feel anger and frustration, and direct it at the United States of America," said Gore.

Continued on Next Page



**Residents escape from the waters of the Yaque river during floods caused by Tropical Storm Olga in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007. Tropical Storm Olga triggered floods and landslides, killing at least eight people in the Dominican Republic and in Puerto Rico.**

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

**Caribbean death toll from Olga at 25**

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**Deadly winter storm hits Northeast**

The sun shines through icy tree limbs in St. Joseph, Mo. on Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007. Utility officials said Thursday that they are still busily trying to restore power to thousands of northwest Missouri residents after an ice storm that's being called the worst in years in that part of the state.

(AP Photo/Dan Gill)

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**CLIMATE CHANGE***Continued from Front Page*

"Or you can make a second choice, you can decide to move forward and do all of the difficult work that needs to be done and save a large open blank space in your document and put a footnote by it that says this document is incomplete."

"Over the next two years, the United States is going to be somewhere it isn't right now. You must anticipate that," he said.

The White House denied that its delegation was playing a blocking role. "I think he is incorrect," said spokeswoman Dana Perino.

Despite Gore's impassioned

intervention, delegates were mostly consumed by the much drier work of finishing a declaration before the conference, launched on December 3, closes Friday.

The goal is set down the parameters for negotiations that will give a quantum boost to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and helping poor countries that are most vulnerable to climate change.

The European Union, backed by developing countries, wants a reference by industrialised countries that a cut of 25-40 percent in their emissions by 2020, compared with 1990

levels, will be a guideline for future talks.

The United States is opposed to the 25-40 figures, and delegates say its position is also shared by Japan, Canada and Russia.

Angered by what it saw as US-led efforts to water down the final text, the EU warned of snubbing climate talks called by Bush next month in Hawaii if the Bali meeting collapsed.

"If we would have a failure in Bali, it would be meaningless to have the major economies meeting," said Humberto Rosa, secretary of state for the environment from EU president Portugal.

The White House retorted:



"Obviously, those comments are not constructive to a conversation where everybody wants to get together for this meeting to talk about a framework for moving forward."

James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, rejected blame, saying: "Every country has a negotiating position, not just the US."

"We will lead, the US will lead, and we will continue to lead, but leadership also requires others to fall in line and follow."

In a report issued this year, the UN's climate-change body, the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

predicted that by 2100 global average surface temperatures could rise by between 1.1 C and 6.4 C (1.98 and 11.52 F) compared to 1980-99 levels, stoked by heat-trapping gases from burning fossil fuels.

More powerful storms, droughts, floods and rising sea levels are among the risks that will escalate in coming decades, threatening hunger and homelessness for millions, it said.

On Thursday, the UN's World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reported that 2007 was set to be the seventh warmest year on record and the decade of 1998-2007 the warmest ever documented. □

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**N.J. to vote on death penalty**

By TOM HESTER Jr.

Associated Press Writer

With New Jersey on the cusp of abolishing capital punishment, death penalty foes are hoping the move will inspire other states to do the same.

New Jersey lawmakers are poised to give final legislative approval on Thursday to a bill abolishing the death penalty, becoming the first state to do so since 1965 when Iowa and West Virginia abolished it.

"I hope New Jersey will give encouragement to other legislators and public officials to have the courage to face this issue squarely," said Joshua Rubenstein, Amnesty International USA's northeast director.

Diann Rust-Tierney, executive director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, said New Jersey reflects a growing national trend against the death penalty, with executions in decline and more states weighing abolition.

"We have learned a lot about the death penalty in the past 30 years," Rust-Tierney said. "When you look closely at the facts, it just doesn't add up to sound policy."

The state Senate approved the measure Monday. The Assembly is to vote Thursday and is expected to pass it. Democratic Gov. Jon S. Corzine has said he'll sign the bill, which would replace death with life without parole.

The nation has executed 1,099 people since the U.S. Supreme Court reauthorized the death penalty in 1976. In 1999, 98 people were executed, the most since 1976; last year 53 people were executed, the lowest since 1996.

The nation's last execution was in Sept. 25 in Texas. Since then, executions have been delayed pending a U.S. Supreme Court decision on whether execution through lethal injection violates the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

Other states have considered abolishing the death penalty, but none have advanced as far as New Jersey. According to the Washington-based Death Penalty Information Center, 37 states have the death penalty.

Bills to abolish the death penalty were recently approved by a Colorado House committee, the Montana Senate and the New Mexico House. But none of those bills have advanced. □



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## Deadly winter storm hits Northeast

By PAT EATON-ROBB  
Associated Press Writer

A deadly winter storm brought snow and sleet to the Northeast on Thursday, while crews in the Plains and Midwest worked to restore power to hundreds of thousands of people left in the dark in its ice-coated wake.

Some parts of the Northeast could receive up to a foot of snow, forecasters said. Schools in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut announced closures, in some cases before flakes even began to fall.

Dozens of traffic accidents were reported on Connecticut roads.

"We're having, I won't say a crisis, but we have an abundance of crashes literally all across the state on main and secondary roads," said Lt. J. Paul Vance. "It really is pretty dangerous, so we would strongly advise people to stay off the roads."

Some businesses sent their workers home early, leading to a steady stream of customers at Sebby Randazzo's liquor store in Columbia. "Before the snow starts, and for the first hour or so, people want to load up for their snow parties," Randazzo said. "They want to gather around the fire with a glass of wine, or have a beer with their buddies, or maybe after they shovel snow for a while they come in and have a beverage." Molly Bergstrom, of Canastota, N.Y., stuffed grocery bags in the back of her car and said she had gone shopping early to beat the worst of the weather.

"I hate driving in the snow. They said it was going to get worse later so I thought I could finish up some shopping and get back home before it did. I still have a couple more stops so I guess that plan is shot," Bergstrom said, the snow starting to pile up.

The storm was blamed for 35 deaths, mostly in traffic accidents, as it moved through the middle of the country. In Oklahoma, about 333,000 homes and businesses still were without power Thursday, officials said. In Missouri, about 35,000 customers remained in the dark, said Al Butkus, spokesman for utility Aquila Inc.

Northeast airports were bracing



for travel problems. By midday, more than 100 flights had been canceled at Newark's airport in New Jersey. But the airport was only seeing delays of about 15 minutes, said Alan Hicks, spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

At Boston's Logan International Airport, air traffic was normal Thursday morning, but the airport expected airlines to cancel up to half of the afternoon's scheduled flights because of snow.

"But unless it snows 2 inches an hour, or we have whiteout conditions, the airport should stay open — maybe with just one runway operating, but open," airport spokesman Phil Orlandella said.

At New York's airports, some airlines were allowing passengers to reschedule their flights free of charge. At Connecticut's largest airport, near Hartford, a dozen flights had been canceled as of 9 a.m., said John Wallace, an airport spokesman.

In Yorktown, N.Y., Mitchell Hardware sold more than 25 shovels Wednesday — nearly twice as many as it usually sells in a week, said assistant manager Mike Malone. Sunshine and milder temperatures on Thursday should help cleanup efforts in much of the Plains, but another winter storm approaching from the west could dump heavy snow on parts of Oklahoma on Friday. More than two dozen shelters were set up at churches and community centers across the Oklahoma for people needing a warm place to stay. Exhibit halls at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City were turned into a shelter Wednesday capable of housing more than 700 people.

Wayne Wooldridge lasted only one cold, dark night in the frigid house he volunteered to watch for his son, who is deployed overseas for the U.S. Air Force. □

## Mother of mall shooter apologizes

By JOSH FUNK  
Associated Press Writer

The mother of the teenage gunman who killed eight people at a busy shopping mall last week apologized Thursday for her son's crime and said she did her best raising him.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Maribel Rodriguez told ABC's "Good Morning America" when asked what she would say to the victims' families. "I'm deeply devastated with you."

Her son, 19-year-old Robert Hawkins, fired more than 30 rounds inside a mall department store Dec. 5, striking 11 people. Eight of them died, and he killed himself. Families held funerals and memorial services for the victims this week.

Rodriguez hasn't had custody of Hawkins since her divorce with his father, which happened about 15 years ago. When he was a teenager, there was one period when she did not have contact with him for more than two years. "I'm not perfect, I know that," she said during the televised interview. "But you tell me: What could I have done differently? I did my best."

Rodriguez told The Associated Press that she sought psychiatric



The United Methodist Church choir sings during the memorial service for Gary Scharf in Curtis, Nebraska, Monday afternoon, Dec. 10, 2007. Scharf was killed in the Omaha mall shooting Dec. 5, 2007.

(AP Photo/Beth Gilbert)

treatment after the shootings, and checked herself out to plan his funeral. She said she and her son had a good relationship, and she felt obligated to apologize for his actions.

"I would never want for anyone to do what I have done these last couple days," Rodriguez said. Hawkins was a troubled teenager who spent four years in a series of treatment centers, group homes and foster care after threatening to kill his stepmother in 2002. He had recently broken up with a girlfriend and lost his job at a McDonald's.

"He was without hope. He was without faith. He was without courage," Rodriguez said during the televised interview. "Because you don't do that to other people. You just don't do that to other people."

She and Hawkins ate supper together at the house of her ex-husband — Hawkins' stepfather — the night before the shootings, Rodriguez said. The stepfather was vacationing in Thailand.

"When I came back to the house, there was this sense, there was this air that something was wrong," she said. □



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# Bush vetoes kids health insurance bill



President Bush waves after attending a church service at St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007.

(AP Photo/Lawrence Jackson)

By JENNIFER LOVEN  
Associated Press Writer

President Bush vetoed legislation Wednesday that would have expanded government-provided health insurance for children, his second slap-down of a bipartisan effort in Congress to dramatically increase funding for the popular program.

It was Bush's seventh veto in seven years — all but one coming since Democrats took control of Congress in January. Wednesday was the deadline for Bush to act or let the bill become law. The president also vetoed an earlier, similar bill expanding the health insurance program.

Bush vetoed the bill in private. In a statement notifying Congress of his decision, Bush said the bill was unacceptable because — like the first one — it allows adults into the program, would cover people in families with incomes above the U.S. median and raises taxes.

"This bill does not put poor children first, and it moves our country's health care system in the wrong direction," Bush's statement said. "Ultimately, our nation's goal should be to move children who have no health insurance to private coverage, not to move children who already

have private health insurance to government coverage."

Bush urged Congress to extend the program at its current funding level before lawmakers leave Washington for their holiday break.

In fact, congressional leaders had already said earlier Wednesday that they now will try only to extend the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, well into 2008 in basically its current form. Their comments signaled that they have given up efforts to substantially expand the program.

The House voted 211-180 late Wednesday to put off until Jan. 23 a vote on overriding the president's veto. "We are not going to let this veto stand," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Republicans said Democrats were scheduling the veto override vote to coincide with the week Bush comes to Congress for the State of the Union address.

The bill passed the Democratic-controlled Senate by a veto-proof margin, but the same was not true in the House. Even after the bill was approved, negotiations continued to find a compromise version that would attract enough Republican lawmakers to override Bush's expected veto. A two-thirds vote in both chambers is required to override a presidential veto.

But that effort was unsuccessful. The bill Bush vetoed would have increased federal funding for SCHIP by \$35 billion over five years, to add an estimated 4 million people to the program that provides insurance coverage for children from families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. The joint

federal-state program currently provides benefits to roughly 6 million people, mostly children.

A major point of contention with the White House was Bush's demand that nearly all poor children eligible for the program be found and enrolled before any in slightly higher-income families could be covered. He originally proposed adding \$5 billion to the program over five years but later said he was willing to go higher as long as his conditions were met.

The president also has opposed using an increased tobacco tax to fund the program expansion.

The bill includes a 61-cent rise on a package of cigarettes.

Bush's veto in early October of a similar bill was narrowly upheld by the House. But such votes are uncomfortable for GOP lawmakers. It is a popular program with the public, making some Republicans wary of sticking with Bush on such an issue with the 2008 elections looming. Of the 43 million people nationwide who lack health insurance, more than 6 million are under 18 years old. That's more than 9 percent of all children.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said the House will take up the extension question Thursday in a bill that also will make adjustments to Medicare.

"We'll obviously need to put additional money" into the children's health insurance program, Hoyer said, because several states say they will have to remove recipients from their rolls if the current funding level continues into next year.

Hoyer declined to say how much new money would go into the program or how long it might be extended. □



RNPS IMAGES OF THE YEAR 2007 - USA - White House advisor Karl Rove (R) hugs U.S. President George W. Bush after Rove publicly announced his resignation on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, August 13, 2007. Bush and Rove departed for the Bush ranch in Texas together immediately after the announcement.

REUTERS/Jim Bourg (UNITED STATES)

## Panel votes on contempt for Rove, Bolten

By LAURIE KELLMAN

Associated Press Writer

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted for a contempt citation against presidential confidants Karl Rove and Josh Bolten on Thursday, the latest move in an inquiry into possibly politically motivated firings of federal prosecutors.

The 12-7 vote sent the citation against the two to the full Senate. Majority Leader Harry Reid told reporters afterward that he will consider whether to bring it to the floor next year.

Rove, the architect of President Bush's two campaigns for the White House, and Bolten, the president's chief of staff, have refused to comply with subpoenas demanding testimony and documents in the congressional probe.

Rove, who recently left government, and Bolten claim the information Congress demands is off-limits under executive privilege. Lawmakers in both the House and Senate dispute that.

The Senate Judiciary Committee vote means that contempt citations against Bush administration officials await floor action in both chambers of Congress.

It's not clear they will advance any further.

Even if the citations receive floor votes, the issue likely would land in federal courts in a drawn-out constitutional showdown over what White House information should be made available for congressional oversight. Any court proceedings would almost certainly survive the Bush administration. □

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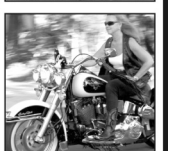
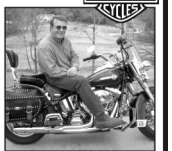
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## Huckabee defends women's rights record

By ANDREW DeMILLO  
Associated Press Writer

Republican Mike Huckabee's record on women's rights is coming under increased scrutiny, including his endorsement of the Southern Baptist Convention's stance that women should "submit graciously" to their husbands and his opposition to sending women into combat. Huckabee, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, defended his record Thursday, saying he appointed many women to high positions in state government and on his staff during his 10 1/2 years as Arkansas governor.

"If you look at my cabinet, I had more women in my cabinet and on my staff in key positions, including chief of staff, than any other governor probably in Arkansas history," Huckabee said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Huckabee had been asked on the TV show about his support of the Baptist convention's statement of beliefs on marriage. The former Arkansas governor and his wife Janet signed a full-page ad in USA Today in support of the statement with 129 other evangelical leaders in 1998.

"A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ," the convention says in its statement of faith. Baptist Press reported that the 1998 ad was addressed to denomination leaders and said: "You are right because you called wives to graciously submit to their husband's sacrificial leadership."

Huckabee was supported by 17 percent of women in a nationwide AP-Ipsos poll earlier this month, making him roughly even with Rudy Giuliani and John McCain for the lead among female voters among GOP presidential contenders.



**Republican Party presidential candidates (L-R) former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, U.S. Rep Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney gather on stage before their debate in Johnston, Iowa, December 12, 2007. Democratic candidates running for president can expect to get a question about the perils of free trade at nearly every campaign stop. But Republicans aren't escaping fears about globalization, either.**

REUTERS/Jason Reed

Huckabee has faced questions before over his support of the marriage statement, with a rival in his 1998 re-election campaign citing the statement and accusing Huckabee of opposing equal pay for women.

"It's one thing for Mike Huckabee to think a wife should submit graciously to her husband, but it's another to have her work for less than she's worth," Democratic challenger Bill Bristow said in a 1998 ad.

Huckabee's campaign then cried foul and accused Bristow of taking a swipe at Southern Baptists.

In 1992, when Huckabee was a candidate for the U.S. Senate, he said in a 229-question survey submitted by The Associated Press that he opposed placing women in combat roles in the military "because of my strong traditional view that women should be treated with respect and dignity and not subject to the kinds of abuses that could occur in combat."

However, Huckabee's traditional view of women apparently doesn't extend to the political arena. □

## Bush says goodbye to Karen Hughes

President Bush made an impromptu appearance at the State Department to bid farewell to one of his closest advisers, Karen Hughes, who left a top diplomatic position on Wednesday to return to Texas and private life.

"I wouldn't be standing here without Karen Hughes," Bush said at a lively going-away party for Hughes after he was introduced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who briefly interrupted an interview with The Associated Press to welcome the surprise guest. "One of her jobs was to teach me how to speak English," Bush joked in a reference to his sometimes inept command of the language,

prompting loud laughter and a rejoinder from Hughes.

"How'd I do?" Hughes asked, drawing a look of mock indignation from Bush.

"I'll deliver the punch lines," the president said sternly, adding: "She never was that good at writing jokes."

Bush also took a shot at the State Department and its perceived culture of ingrained diplomatic niceties, saying that he named Hughes to head up the agency's public diplomacy efforts to shake up the system. "There was no doubt in my mind that she (Hughes) was a change agent and sometimes this building could use change agents," he said. "I'm not saying all of the



**President Bush, left, kisses Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes, right, during a farewell reception for her at the State Dept., in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007.**

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

time, but certainly when it came to making sure that the world knows our intentions and our good hearts." □

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# UN expert: Guantanamo hearings unfair

By FRANK JORDANS  
Associated Press Writer

A U.N. human rights expert said Wednesday he found on a recent visit to Guantanamo Bay that the prison camp is not meeting

international justice standards. Martin Scheinin, the U.N.'s independent investigator on human rights in the fight against terrorism, has been campaigning against the Bush administration's detention practices, military

## Caribbean death toll from Olga at 25



Dominican authorities reported 11 more deaths Thursday in floods caused by Tropical Storm Olga, raising the Caribbean-wide death toll to 25.

Most were killed in the central Dominican Republic province of Santiago after officials, fearing a collapse of a dam, ordered the release of water into the Yaque River that inundated seven towns.

"We knew the damage we were going to cause below. We did not want to, but we had to," Octavio Rodriguez, a member of the committee that decided to open the floodgates, told The Associated Press.

The storm was also blamed for two deaths in northern Haiti and one in Puerto Rico. □



Former Guantanamo detainees from Sudan Adel Hassan Hamad (R) and Salim Mahmoud Mohamed pose for a photograph upon their arrival in Khartoum, December 13, 2007, after their release from an American military facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

REUTERS/Mohamed Nureldin Abdalla (SUDAN)

courts and interrogation techniques.

He said his visit to Guantanamo last week raised more questions about the legal framework used to prosecute detainees there.

"The hearings provided graphic illustrations of the practical difficulties in providing fair trials at a distant military base," said Scheinin, a Finnish law professor. About 305 detainees are held at Guantanamo, almost all of them without charges. The men suspected of links to terrorism are held as "enemy combatants" without the same rights as traditional prisoners of war.

U.S. officials said Wednesday they were disappointed by the report.

Scheinin's finding on the legal process at Guantanamo was "in part misleading about the facts

of the process, and revisits well-worn, ill-informed criticisms of military commissions hearings," said Melanie J. Khanna, a U.S. legal adviser. "The unfortunate fact is that a large part of the report again repeats unfair and oversimplified criticisms of the United States."

Scheinin was presenting his observations on Guantanamo to the 47-member U.N. Human Rights Council as part of a wider review of U.S. practices in the fight against terrorism.

He recalled attending hearings for Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a former driver for al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden who is charged under the 2006 Military Commissions Act with conspiracy and providing material support for terrorism.

He said it seemed impossible for defense lawyers to provide

evidence because they were unable to call witnesses from abroad or the detention facility. Scheinin told The Associated Press that the recent visit confirmed his findings.

In particular, he expressed concern that the Military Commissions Act — which addresses the legal rights of detainees held outside U.S. territory — was being applied to people who had been seized before the law was created.

"Doing this many years after they have originally been detained on other grounds unavoidably results in something which international law categorizes as arbitrary detention," Scheinin said.

He also described as "very problematic" the question of the independence of the military tribunals and the use of evidence obtained by coercion.

Of the hearing he observed, Scheinin said "the military judge really did his best in difficult circumstances to strive for a fair trial, but within impossible conditions."

In addition to observing the legal hearings, U.S. officials had invited Scheinin to visit the actual detention facilities. Scheinin said he declined that offer because he was not guaranteed unmonitored access to the detainees.

"They wanted me also to go to the detention facility but unfortunately their policy of not allowing for full access did not make it possible for me this time," he told the AP. "I hope there will be another chance." □

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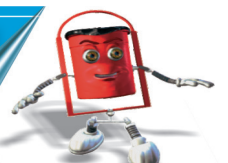
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## Lula loses as Brazil financial tax nixed

By ALAN CLENDENNING  
AP Business Writer

Brazil's Senate on Thursday refused to renew a financial transaction tax that fills the government's coffers, handing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva a political defeat that could threaten his social programs for the poor.

The vote held before dawn after months of contentious debate fell four votes shy of the 60 percent majority needed to extend the tax until 2011, meaning Silva's administration stands to lose about \$22 billion in revenue per year.

The money is used to fund programs ranging from health care to the president's famed anti-hunger program aimed at lifting Brazilians out of misery. The government could try to get the tax levied on everything from checks to bank transfers renewed again next year, but the measure wouldn't go into effect until three months after passage.

As a result of the vote, the tax will be lifted on Dec. 31, creating an immediate budget shortfall.

The tax, known in Brazil as the CPMF, was established in 1993 as a temporary measure to subsidize the country's public health care system. It charges a 0.38 percent fee on all financial transactions nationwide.

The tax extension had already passed in Brazil's lower house of Congress, but senators who opposed the bill argued that the CPMF has elevated the nation's tax burden as government spending rose faster than economic growth.

They also said the tax hurts the poor and isn't needed anymore because the government's overall tax receipts have increased sharply as Brazil enjoys a sustained economic boom.

The government spends about 45 percent of CPMF revenues on anti-poverty efforts, 40 percent goes to health care and about 15 percent is used to help cover social security benefits, the Finance Ministry said.

Silva's administration could try to cut spending from the 2008 budget to make up the CPMF shortfall, or seek to have other taxes raised to reduce the deficit. Jose Mucio, Silva's primary liaison with Congress, said the administration hasn't decided yet how it will find money to fund social programs and health care for the needy but "must look for new ways to make sure these Brazilians aren't left out." □

# Argentine leader rebukes US over cash

By BILL CORMIER  
Associated Press Writer

Argentina's president reacted angrily Thursday to U.S. charges that a suitcase full of Venezuelan cash was intended to finance her presidential campaign, calling it an example of "garbage in international politics."

President Cristina Fernandez also suggested that anyone who might think a female president is more easily influenced is wrong.

The disclosure came Wednesday in a Miami court hearing for a criminal complaint against four men arrested and charged with being illegal Venezuelan agents who attempted a cover-up.

U.S. prosecutors said a suitcase filled with nearly \$800,000 was a campaign contribution from the Venezuelan government to Fernandez,


who was inaugurated this week as Argentina's first popularly elected female president.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's government called it a "fabricated scandal."

Fernandez said she remains undeterred in her quest to deepen "relations with all Latin American nations and also friendship with ... Venezuela."

"This president may be a woman but she's not going to allow herself to be pressured," said Fernandez, alluding to the scandal.

She also took a jab at officials in the U.S. government, complaining that "more than friendly nations, they want countries ... subordinated" to them. □



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# Iraqi city mourns after deadly bombing

By BRADLEY BROOKS

Associated Press Writer

A southern Shiite city hit by three synchronized car bombs buried its dead Thursday, while provincial officials lowered the death toll from 41 to at least 25, with scores wounded, in one of the worst attacks against Iraqi civilians in months.

Amarah, an oil-rich city about 200 miles southeast of Baghdad, has largely escaped the sectarian bloodshed that has plagued Iraq, but some officials fear attacks like the one that occurred Wednesday could ignite fighting between powerful Shiite factions.

Hospitals were crowded with the more than 100 people wounded in the attacks.

Provincial authorities lowered the death toll from 41 to at least 25, blaming confusion in the immediate aftermath of the bombings for the conflicting numbers.

A local police officer at the city's operations room, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to release the information, said 25 were killed and 135 wounded.

Saadoun Sami Hassan, spokesman for the provincial health directorate, said 28 were



**An Iraqi woman grieves for her relative in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Baghdad, Iraq Thursday Dec. 13, 2007. Three car bombs exploded in quick succession, on Wednesday, in the market district of a southern Iraqi city of Amarah 320 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Baghdad on Wednesday, killing at least 41 people and injuring 150 in a Shiite region that has largely been spared the country's sectarian bloodshed, authorities said.**

(AP Photo/Alaa al-Marjani)

killed, including a man who died Thursday, and 150 were wounded.

"We expect death toll to rise as most of the wounded suffer serious injuries in the heads by the flying shrapnel," Hassan told The Associated Press by telephone.

The attack came just days before

the British are expected to hand over to local officials control of neighboring Basra province — the last under its domain since the 2003 invasion.

Fears are rising about whether Iraq's mostly Shiite security forces can control Shiite militias competing for power in the oil-rich south, even as U.S. officials report dramatic falls in violence nationwide.

U.S. commanders worry that al-Qaida in Iraq and other

extremists might try spectacular attacks on Shiite civilians in less-protected areas outside Baghdad — especially where there is little coalition military presence.

No group claimed responsibility for the Amarah explosions, which appeared to be bomb-rigged cars rather than suicide attacks. The blasts occurred minutes apart and seemed to be timed to bring maximum carnage.

Car bombs are the signature weapon of al-Qaida in Iraq and other Sunni extremists, who are seeking new sanctuaries after being driven out of the Baghdad area. But such groups have had virtually no presence in Amarah and the surrounding Maysan province, where there are few Sunni communities to offer them shelter.

Instead, rival Shiite militias — some believed to be backed by Iran — pose the biggest security threat in the south.

That threat has drawn new attention since Britain announced plans to draw down its military presence.

British forces handed control of Maysan province to the Iraqis in April. In a few days, Britain is expected to turn over oil-rich Basra, long besieged by militia turf battles. Before Wednesday, Amarah and the surrounding province accounted for less than 1 percent of the civilian casualties reported this year, according to

an AP count.

Maj. Gen. Abdul-Karim Khalaf, an Interior Ministry spokesman, said the police chief was fired. A provincial official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said the police chief ignored warnings Dec. 4 about possible terrorist attacks in Amarah.

In the Kurdish dominated town of Khanaqin, 90 miles northeast of Baghdad near the Iranian border, a roadside bomb killed four civilians and wounded 12 on Wednesday, said Col. Azad Eisa of the Khanaqin police. He blamed al-Qaida in Iraq.

The U.S. military said a cache of Iranian-made rockets was turned over by Iraqi forces to American soldiers based at Forward Operating Base Delta, southeast of Baghdad.

U.S. soldiers also killed two suspected insurgents and destroyed a weapons cache in the village of Bawi, on the outskirts of Salman Pak, just southeast of Baghdad. In eastern Baghdad, troops captured 17 suspected militants, the military said.

In Baghdad, police said three shops selling alcohol were blown up early Thursday. There were no reports of casualties.

In Mosul, gunmen stormed a house and killed the woman who owns it, apparently because she had turned a room in the home into a beauty salon. □

## First Palestinian policewomen begin work

By DALIA NAMMARI

Associated Press Writer

Palestinian pedestrians gawked at the unusual sight of female police officers directing traffic in Ramallah on Wednesday, the first batch of women to venture into a job traditionally reserved for men in the West Bank.

The women wore uniforms of navy blue pants and light blue shirts and many donned navy blue headscarves, a sign of Muslim modesty. Some male police officers sneered at the women as they directed traffic and kept pedestrians from jaywalking on their first day on the job.

The new recruits are part of the first class of Palestinian policewomen who recently completed a European Union-sponsored training program, part of a broader EU effort to improve ill-equipped Palestinian law enforcement agencies.

In addition to directing traffic, their duties also include conducting traffic patrols, house searches and security checks on women in prisons and universities.

Roles of authority for women are widely frowned upon in conservative Palestinian society,



**A female Palestinian police officer directs traffic in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007. Palestinian pedestrians gawked at the unusual sight of women directing chaotic Ramallah traffic on Wednesday, the first batch of women to venture into a job traditionally reserved for Palestinian men in the West Bank.**

(AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

but several bystanders said they were impressed.

"This is wonderful — watching Palestinian women enforcing law and order," said Fuad Murar, 59. Ashjan Abu Srour, a 23-year-old policewoman, wore an Islamic headscarf as she coaxed an elderly couple to walk on the sidewalk, not on the road.

"I was a little afraid in the beginning, because our society

imposes a certain lifestyle for women," Abu Srour said. "But now, after spending some time in the street, I am not afraid."

According to the most recent EU count, the overall number of females in the Palestinian civil police service was only 500 compared to more than 18,000 men. The women were confined mostly to clerical and administrative duties. □



**U.S. Army Capt. Mike Berriman, left, 1st Lt. Matt Lynes, second left, Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney L. Greene, second right, and Lt. Col. Johnnie Johnson, right, of Task Force 4-64 Armor salute a seriously-wounded comrade as his medevac helicopter leaves Ibn Sina Hospital in the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq on Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007. The soldier, who was wounded by a roadside bomb in Baghdad, was transferred to the Air Force Theater Hospital for further treatment after being stabilized at Ibn Sina.**

(AP Photo/Maya Allueruzzo)

## US military deaths in Iraq at 3,888

By The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007, at least 3,888 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. The figure includes eight military civilians. At least 3,166 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The AP count is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated Wednesday at 10 a.m. EST.

The British military has reported 173 deaths; Italy, 33; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 21; Bulgaria, 13; Spain, 11; Denmark, seven; El Salvador, five; Slovakia, four; Latvia, three; Estonia, Netherlands, Thailand, Romania, two each; and Australia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, South Korea, one death each. □



# NATO chief urges Japan to support Afghan efforts

by Harumi Ozawa

The head of NATO called Thursday for Japan's support for efforts to quell insurgency in Afghanistan amid intense debate in this pacifist nation about how to contribute to global security.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer urged closer ties between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Japan, the world's second largest economy.

Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda told the NATO chief in a meeting his government was working to push through legislation to resume an Indian Ocean naval refuelling mission in support of US-led operations in Afghanistan.

"We are doing all we can to enact new legislation for early resumption of the mission," Fukuda said, according to a Japanese statement.

"We highly appreciate the Japanese refuelling assistance to the NATO members," Scheffer replied, after earlier calling for the mission to be resumed.

"I would hope that Japan... has not yet reached the limit of its possibilities in the political sense of participating in the actual operations in Afghanistan," Scheffer said in an earlier speech.

Fukuda's government was forced to call home the ships last month after the opposition, which controls one house of parliament, refused to support an extension of the mandate authorising the mission.

The opposition argues that officially pacifist Japan should not be part of "American wars" that are not authorised by the UN Security Council.

Instead, opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa has said Japan should be able to join the UN-backed International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO's peace-keeping force in Afghanistan.

Scheffer said he hoped to see debate "on what Japan could do more (of) in Afghanistan under the banner of the United Nations, under the banner of ISAF."

More than 50,000 international troops mainly operating under the NATO-led peace-keeping force are helping the Afghan government in its battle against resurgent Taliban extremists.

But the NATO chief also said he understood Japan's caution about how far to deviate from its official pacifism.

"We make it very clear that these are sensitive national issues. They are for Japan alone to resolve," he said in the speech.

Japan's constitution says that the

country forever renounces the right to wage war.

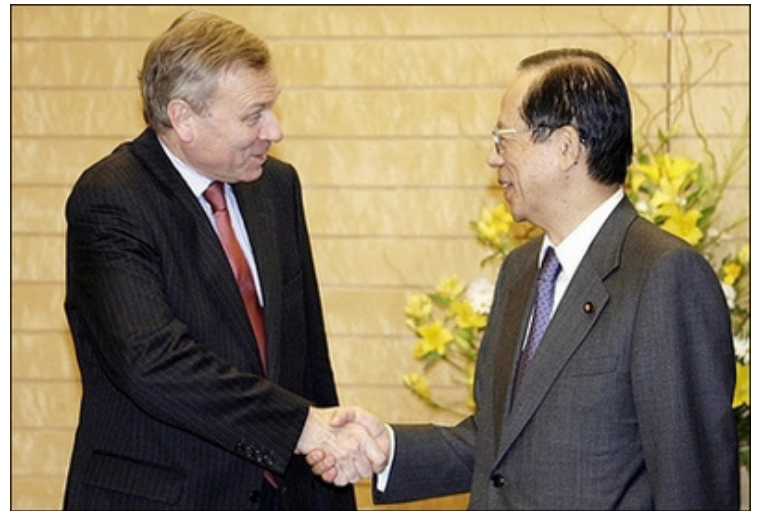
Japan sent troops to Iraq on a reconstruction mission but the forces were protected by soldiers from allied nations and returned home last year without firing a single shot.

The NATO chief was due also to meet separately with Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura later Thursday as part of a three-day visit.

In his speech, Scheffer stressed the need for stronger relations between Japan and NATO.

"In the 21st century, NATO is becoming more and more important for a nation like Japan," he said. "Because we are basically defending the same universal values."

"I can assure you as a secretary general of NATO that all the 26 allies of NATO are very much interested in strengthening the bonds between Japan and



NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer(L) shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda prior to their talks at Fukuda's office in Tokyo. The head of NATO called Thursday for Japan's support for efforts to quell insurgency in Afghanistan amid intense debate in this pacifist nation about how to contribute to global security.

(AFP/POOL/Yoshikazu Tsuno)

NATO for the security of all our people's," he said. Fukuda's predecessor Shinzo Abe pledged to play a wider role in NATO's peace-keeping when he visited

the organisation's headquarters in January. But he resigned in September after a slew of domestic scandals and an upper house election defeat. □

## US experts aiding S. Korea in oil spill

A team of U.S. Coast Guard experts arrived in South Korea on Thursday to help with the country's worst oil spill, as hundreds of vessels struggled in bad weather to contain the disaster for a seventh day.

The three American Coast Guard officials have significant hands-on experience with oil-spill management and will help draw up containment measures jointly with Korean experts, the Korean Coast Guard said in a statement.

An expert from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also arrived earlier Thursday on the same mission.

The largest oil spill in South Korean history on Dec. 7 released about 66,000 barrels into the sea off the west coast, devastating hundreds of seafood farms and turning scenic beaches black. The volume was more than twice as much as South Korea's worst previous spill in 1995.

The National Emergency Management Agency said the spill has so far contaminated 104 miles of coast in Taean County, about 95 miles southwest of Seoul.

The agency said 339 seafood farms have been hit and an additional 220 farms were expected to be affected.

On Thursday, about 220 ships, including Coast Guard, navy and private fishing boats, and 14 helicopters battled strong winds and high waves to contain the slick, the Coast Guard said. On shore, more than 21,000 troops, public officials, residents and volunteers helped clean up.

"We're continuing the operation at night, mobilizing ships equipped with searchlights," said Lee Won-yol, a Korean Coast Guard official in Taean. "But the weather is not good. Winds are strong and waves are high."

The accident occurred when a barge carrying a crane lost control and slammed into the supertanker Hebei Spirit, causing it to gush oil. □

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# Most Pakistanis want Musharraf to quit, poll shows

By Alistair Scrutton

Two-thirds of Pakistanis want President Pervez Musharraf to resign and his allies will fare badly in parliamentary elections next month, according to the first major poll published since he declared emergency rule.

The U.S.-based International Republican Institute (IRI) poll comes weeks before the January 8 election, in which parties loyal to Musharraf are battling against two main opposition leaders, former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif.

The poll showed more than two-thirds of Pakistanis opposed Musharraf's move on November 3 to impose emergency rule and suspend the constitution. He then cracked down on the media, detained thousands of opponents and replaced the Supreme Court. In the face of international pressure, Musharraf is set to lift the emergency on Saturday.

"These are absolutely the worst results Musharraf has seen. He was much higher only a year ago," said Rob Varsalone, country director of IRI, which has been conducting polls in Pakistan since 2002.

The poll underscores Musharraf's slumping popularity this year as the armed forces struggled with growing militant violence, while his attempt to remove Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry backfired and sparked widespread street protests.

Underscoring ongoing violence, two suicide bombers killed three soldiers, two civilians and

wounded 18 people at a military checkpoint in Baluchistan province, the latest of a series of such attacks that have killed more than 400 people since July. Only 30 percent of those polled approved of the job the president was doing, the poll said.

When asked who respondents thought was the best leader to handle the problems facing Pakistan, 31 percent chose Bhutto, 25 percent cited Sharif and 23 percent said Musharraf.

Pakistan looks like it is heading for a hung election, which would force parties to seek alliances.

In a hypothetical election, Bhutto's party would garner 30 percent, Sharif's party would get 25 percent and the pro-Musharraf party would win 23 percent, the survey said.

The Islamist party alliance would only garner 3 percent.

If the poll were translated into election results, it would be a massive blow for Musharraf.

**MUSHARRAF IN THE BALANCE**

A poor election showing could mean a hostile parliament that might even move to impeach Musharraf, who stepped down as army chief last month, over accusations he acted unconstitutionally in securing a new term as president.

The poll could bolster accusations of voter fraud if the president's allies actually do well in the vote. Opposition parties have vowed to protest against an unfair result, raising the prospect of more instability in the nuclear-armed



**Former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif is surrounded by his supporters during an election rally in Haripur. Twin suicide bombers blew themselves up close to a military checkpoint in southwest Pakistan, killing five soldiers and wounding 22 people.**

(AFP/Tariq Mahmood)

U.S. ally.

Election monitors in Pakistan expect the vote to be rigged.

Economic issues, not security and political problems, remained the greatest concerns for Pakistanis. Fifty-three percent of respondents described inflation as the top issue, amid sharp rises in the price of staples like bread.

"There is no atta (flour) in the market for the past many days," said Yasmin Shaheen, a housewife struggling to feed her four children who dislike eating rice three times a day.

"We curse Musharraf every day as only he is responsible for this shortage." □

## Activists held under strict security law

By SEAN YOONG

Associated Press Writer

Malaysian authorities arrested five ethnic Indian activists Thursday under a security law that allows indefinite detention without trial, a lawyer said.

The activists are key officials in the Hindu Rights Action Force, or Hindraf, which held a street protest Nov. 25 that drew about 20,000 ethnic Indians complaining about alleged racial discrimination.

"They will be detained for at least two years under the Internal Security Act," Deputy Internal Security Minister Johari Baharom told The Associated Press. "This action is necessary because they have been causing a lot of problems for the public."

The arrests escalate a government crackdown on Hindraf since it organized last month's rally — the biggest protest involving ethnic Indians in more than a decade and one that triggered fears of ethnic unrest in this multiracial country.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi earlier this week said the government will not tolerate street demonstrations because they could lead to violence. He warned that if necessary, he would invoke the ISA "without feeling guilty, without feeling sad."

The arrests marked the first time the ISA — meant for suspects regarded as threats to national security — has been used against government critics since 2001, when six opposition activists were detained.

Dozens of Hindraf supporters gathered outside the police headquarters in Kuala Lumpur to protest the arrests Thursday. Riot police stood watch to maintain order.

Hindraf has demanded equality and fair treatment for Indians, saying an affirmative action program that gives preferential treatment to the Muslim Malay majority in business, jobs and education is tantamount to racial discrimination.

The government denies it discriminates against Indians.

Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, a leading Malaysian human rights activist, criticized the arrests.

"You can never justify the use of the ISA," Syed Ibrahim said. "We are concerned about these detainees because there have been numerous cases of police torture in ISA cases."

Ethnic Indians make up about 8 percent of Malaysia's 27 million people. □



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Flags of the EU-Treaty are flown in front of Lisbon's Belem Monastery December 12, 2007.

(Hugo Correia/Reuters)

## EU leaders sign Treaty of Lisbon to reform bloc

By Axel Bugge

European Union leaders signed the Treaty of Lisbon on Thursday to reform the bloc's institutions and give it stronger leadership, marking the end of a difficult process that has lasted nearly a decade.

At an elaborate signing ceremony at Lisbon's grandiose Jeronimos Monastery, leaders said the treaty would open a new chapter in EU history by giving it a more robust foreign policy and more democracy in decision-making.

The treaty replaces an ambitious constitution that was scrapped after French and Dutch voters rejected it in 2005.

"This was the European project that many generations dreamt of and others before us championed, with a vision of the future," Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates said at the ceremony.

"Europe was blocked, without knowing how to move forward and we found the solution with this treaty," French President Nicolas Sarkozy told reporters.

The treaty is a toned down version of the constitution and EU leaders hope it will be effective in adapting the bloc's structures to having 27 members, after it opened its doors to 12 mostly ex-communist states in 2004 and 2007.

"For the first time, the countries that were once divided by a totalitarian curtain, are now united in support of a common treaty that they had themselves negotiated," European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso told the leaders.

"It is the treaty of an enlarged Europe from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea," he said.

### LONG-TERM PRESIDENT

The bloc's rotating presidencies will end with the new treaty and be replaced in 2009 with a long-term president of the European Council, who will chair summits. The treaty will also create a foreign policy high representative.

It will allow more decisions to be taken by majority voting, notably on justice and security issues, and give more say to the European and national parliaments. A charter of fundamental European rights is attached to the treaty.

The leaders signed the treaty in the monastery's cloister, taking turns to sign under the hall's elaborate arches while Beethoven's Ode to Joy was played in the background.

Afterwards, the leaders hopped on a tram with the words 'Treaty of Lisbon' written on its side to travel the short distance to lunch at a nearby museum.

The signing will start a ratification process by national EU parliaments that leaders hope will avoid the 2005 "No" by French and Dutch voters to the proposed constitution.

This time around, only Ireland is planning a referendum, reducing the risks of an upset, even though polls suggest many Irish voters are undecided or indifferent.

Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado warned in an interview on Thursday that failure to ratify the treaty would create fresh turmoil in Europe.

"We would have a political crisis in Europe, a serious one, worse than the one we've already been through," Amado told the Spanish daily ABC.

In streamlining decision-making and ending a drawn-out process, officials hope the treaty can allow the EU to turn to more important things, such as job creation and the challenges of globalization. □

## Russia, Iran reach nuclear plant deal

By JIM HEINTZ

Associated Press Writer

Russia and Iran reached agreement Thursday on a schedule for finishing construction of a nuclear power plant that plays a central role in the international tensions over Iran's atomic program, Russian news agencies reported.

The reports cited the head of plant contractor Atomstroieexport, Sergei Shmatko, as saying details of the timetable for completing the facility in the southern Iranian city of Bushehr would be released later this month.

The United States and other critics have long protested construction of the \$1 billion plant, saying it would give Iran cover for developing a nuclear weapons program.

Construction at the plant has been sporadically delayed amid disputes between Iran and Russia over payment, fuel delivery and other issues. But Russia has remained opposed to a U.S.-led push for international sanctions against Iran for allegedly seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

"The difficulties with the Iranian customer have been settled," Shmatko was quoted as saying by the ITAR-Tass news agency. He did not give details of the completion plans, but said that fuel would be delivered to Iran about half a year before the plant launches operations, the agency reported.

Although Russia has resisted drives to impose sanctions on



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, right, greets his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki during their meeting in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007. Russia and Iran reached an agreement Thursday on a schedule for finishing construction of the Bushehr nuclear plant, which plays a central role in the international tensions over Iran's nuclear program, Russian news agencies reported.

(AP Photo/Mikhail Metzel)

Iran, it also repeatedly has urged Tehran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve concerns over the nuclear program.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov underlined that position later Thursday after a meeting in Moscow with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki.

Lavrov said resolving the controversy is possible "solely on the basis of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, IAEA rules and principles and, certainly, with Iran proving its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy," according to the Interfax news

agency.

Lavrov spoke by phone Thursday with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice about "the continuation of diplomatic efforts on resolving the Iranian nuclear issue," as well as Kosovo, the Foreign Ministry said.

Shmatko raised the prospect of creating a Russian-Iranian joint venture "to ensure security" at the Bushehr plant, according to the RIA-Novosti agency.

That could indicate Russian interest in ensuring that enriched uranium at the plant is not stolen or diverted. Depleted fuel rods also could be reprocessed into plutonium. □



Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt Davis, aide to Prince Philip, leaves the High Court in London, Thursday Dec. 13, 2007, after attending the inquest into the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Extracts from affectionate 'Dearest Pa' letters between Diana, Princess of Wales, and Prince Philip, in which she thanked him for his marriage guidance skills were shown to the jury at the inquest into her death.

(AP Photo/Andrew Parsons-pa)

## Diana inquest hears extracts of letters

By ROBERT BARR

Associated Press Writer

Jurors at the British inquest into the deaths of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed heard extracts Thursday from affectionate correspondence between the princess and her father-in-law, Prince Philip.

A friend of the princess, meanwhile, denied Mohamed Al Fayed's charge that she spied on Diana for British intelligence.

"This is absolute fantasy on his part," Rosa Monckton testified.

She said she believed that "somebody close to me is connected" to the security services, but she did not identify the person.

The letters exchanged with the prince were produced by Philip's private secretary, Sir Miles Hunt-Davis. Mohamed Al Fayed, father of Diana's boyfriend, has claimed that Philip directed a murderous conspiracy against the couple, who died in a car crash in Paris on Aug. 31, 1997. In one of the letters read to the jury, Diana wrote: "Dearest Pa, I was particularly touched by your most recent letter which proved to me, if I didn't already know it, that you really do care."

Hunt-Davis said Prince Philip had provided, at the coroner's request, copies of his typewritten letters to Diana and her handwritten replies between June and September 1992.

Hunt-Davis said that because of speculation about the correspondence, Philip "rather reluctantly eventually authorized a statement to be issued saying that in no circumstances had he written anything to the princess which was in the least way as described in the press reports."

The coroner, Lord Justice Scott Baker, said the letters did not disclose anything to support suggestions that they contained "unpleasant, nasty or insulting" material. □



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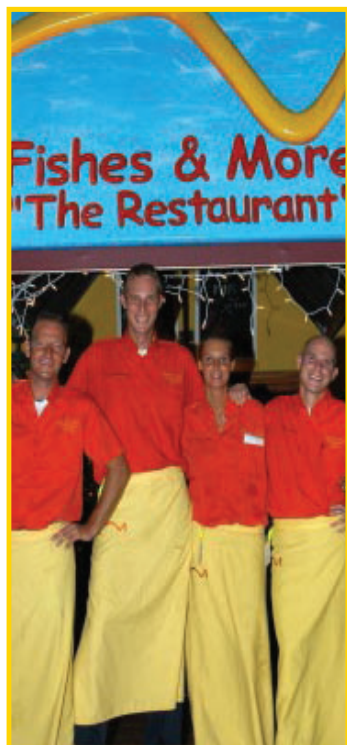
consider yourself addicted. The owners Jeroen Kuling and Hans Heijink together with the

ryone to enjoy. The ambiance at the restaurant is out of this world, whether dinning inside in the relaxed air-conditioned dinning room or outside on the terrace to enjoy the tropical breeze and daily live music.

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a half years ago and has been a great success since day one.

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## U.S. military's Africa command alarms aid workers

By Andrew Gray

Mary Yates is deputy to the commander of the U.S. military's new Africa Command. But she has no stars on her shoulder and does not wear a uniform.

Yates is a career diplomat who has served as U.S. ambassador to Ghana and Burundi. Her appointment symbolizes the military's effort to make its newest command very different from the others and a possible model for the future.

The command, responsible for U.S. military operations in Africa, will include more diplomats, aid experts and other civilians than headquarters for other parts of the world. And they will be integral to the organization, not just advisers.

The U.S. government bills that change as an effort to make sure all its branches work together.

But the structure has alarmed aid agencies, who see the military encroaching into traditionally civilian areas such as aid work and economic development and believe armed forces should have a minimal role in those efforts.

Yates says putting more civilians in a military command is an attempt to learn from the past. The Pentagon, State Department and other U.S. agencies have often been accused of failing to cooperate or working at cross purposes.

"Clearly we have all learned a lot in the last decade from the Balkans to Afghanistan to Iraq that we need work together," she said in a telephone interview.

"Instead of having to do it ... in a battleground, we have a chance to build this structure from the ground up," Yates said from the command's current home in Stuttgart, Germany. The headquarters hopes to have a presence in Africa later.

### REGIONAL COMMANDS

The U.S. military divides the world into regional commands. Previously, responsibility for Africa was split between European Command, Pacific Command and Central Command, which is the headquarters for the Middle East.

In February, President George W. Bush announced the creation of Africa Command. Known as Africom, it is being set up under European Command in Stuttgart but should become a fully independent command by October. Some African states have criticized the move. Many Africans suspect an effort to secure mineral resources and assert U.S. interests. □

# At least 17 dead in Somali unrest

By SALAD DUHUL

Associated Press Writer

Mortar rounds slammed into the biggest market in Mogadishu on Thursday and gunbattles erupted across the city, killing 17 people hours after a government official said radical Muslims had regrouped and were poised to launch a massive attack.

At least 12 people were killed and more than 40 wounded in the blasts in the Somali capital and the death toll was expected to rise from the latest bloodshed blamed on Islamic insurgents. Another five were killed in a separate gunbattle in the city.

"I saw so many dead people lying on the road, I couldn't even look at them, I was so scared for my life," resident Salah Garweyne told The Associated Press.

At least 19 of the wounded by the shelling were in critical condition, said Dr. Hassan Osman Isse at Medina Hospital.

Before the attacks, Sheik Qasim Ibrahim Nur, director of security at the National Security Ministry, said the government has "no power to resist the Islamists."

"About 80 percent of Somalia is not safe and is not under control of the government," Nur told the AP. "Islamists are planning to launch a massive attack against the (government) and its allied troops."

Nur appealed for international support, saying Islamic fighters "are everywhere."

Presidential spokesman Hussein Mohamed Mohamud also said that the Muslim fighters were regrouping, and said they have "a lot of weapons and foreign fighters."

President Abdullahi Yusuf was in London for what his aides described as a regular medical checkup. On Thursday, the 73-year-old president was said to be well, but uncertainty over his condition persists, adding to the tension in his homeland.

Officials from Ethiopia, which has troops in Somalia backing Yusuf's government, were not immediately available for comment Thursday.

Government officials rarely acknowledge what many observers have concluded about their tenuous position. There are increasing signs that the Islamic extremist group that controlled much of southern Somalia last year is again gaining power in this Horn of Africa nation.

Members of the group and the feared Shabab — its military wing — have been spotted with increasing frequency throughout central Somalia.



A civilian is carried by his relatives to Madina hospital after a mortar shell exploded killing several people in Bakara market Mogadishu, Somalia Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007. Mortars slammed into the biggest market in Mogadishu on Thursday, killing at least 12 people hours after a government official said radical Muslims had regrouped and were poised to launch a massive attack. More than 40 people were wounded in the attack on the Somali capital and the death toll was expected to rise.

(AP Photo)

The Islamic group, known as the Council of Islamic Courts, was driven from power last year when Ethiopia backed the government with soldiers and fighter jets. Ethiopia's intervention had the tacit approval of the United States, which accuses the Council of Islamic Courts of having links to al-Qaida.

In Kismayo, Somalia's third-largest city, a member of the Shabab said his group was sending soldiers to the capital daily to fight the Ethiopians. The fighter asked that his name not be published for fear of reprisals. Kismayo is some 310 miles south of the capital.

Over the weekend, about 50 heavily armed militiamen briefly overran Bula Burte town in central Somalia, some about 130 miles north of the capital, said the regional governor, Yusuf Dabaged. □



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## Study: Why pregnant women don't topple



**A pregnant model showcases a costume during a maternity fashion show organised by a newly launched company which caters to pregnant women in New Delhi August 25, 2007. Pregnant women may stand out a mile away with their characteristic backward-leaning stance, but that clumsy-looking position is a unique adaptation that evolved over millennia, anthropologists said on Wednesday.**

(Adnan Abidi/Reuters)

**By SETH BORENSTEIN**  
AP Science Writer

Scientists think they have figured out why pregnant women don't lose their balance and topple over despite ever-growing weight up front. Evolution provided them with slight differences from men in their lower backs and hip joints, allowing them to adjust their center of gravity, new research shows.

This elegant engineering is seen only in female humans and our immediate ancestors who walked on two feet, but not in chimps and apes, according to a study published in Thursday's journal Nature.

"That's a big load that's pulling you forward," said Liza Shapiro, an anthropology professor at the University of Texas and the only one of the study's three authors who has actually been pregnant. "You experience discomfort. Maybe it would be a lot worse if (the design changes) were not there."

Harvard anthropology researcher Katherine Whitcome found two physical differences in male and female backs that until now had gone unnoticed: One lower lumbar vertebra is wedged-shaped in women and more square in men; and a key hip joint is 14 percent larger in women than men when body size is taken into account.

The researchers did engineering tests that show how those slight changes allow women to carry the additional and growing load without toppling over — and typically without disabling back pain.

"When you think about it, women make it look so very damn easy," Whitcome said. "They are experiencing a pretty impressive challenge. Evolution has tinkered ... to the point where they can deal with the challenge. "It's absolutely beautiful," she said. "A little bit of tinkering can have a profound effect."

Walking on two feet separates humans from most other animals. And while anthropologists still debate the evolutionary benefit of walking on two feet, there are notable costs, such as pain for pregnant females. Animals on all fours can better handle the extra belly weight.

The back changes appear to have evolved to overcome the cost of walking on two feet, said Harvard anthropology professor Daniel Lieberman.

When the researchers looked back at fossil records of human ancestors, including the oldest spines that go back 2 million years to our predecessor, Australopithecus, they found a male without the lower-back changes and a female with them. But what about men with stomachs the size of babies or bigger? What keeps them from toppling over?

Their back muscles are used to compensate, but that probably means more back pain, theorized Shapiro, who added: "It would be a fun study to do to look at men with beer bellies to see if they shift their loads." □





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## Here's the surge Iraq needs

By Christopher Kojm

Iraq continues to surprise us. Even with our massive presence in Iraq, the United States responds to developments there more than it shapes them.

The Sunni tribes in Anbar decided they hate Al Qaeda more than they hate the American presence. They decided they need an ally against the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. Gen. David Petraeus, in turn, decided to place priority on protecting the Iraqi people, and decided it is better to work with the insurgents than to be their targets. Across a wide swath of western and central Iraq, US forces and former insurgents are at or near an uneasy cease-fire. So what do we do now?

The troop surge is the story of 2007. What the US needs in 2008 is a surge of political, military, diplomatic, and humanitarian activity across the board, in order to achieve a reduced but still attainable objective in Iraq – stability. Without stability, more ambitious goals cannot be achieved. With it, US forces can begin to withdraw.

We need to press the Iraqi government as hard as we can on questions of national reconciliation. Why? Because the current moment of hope in Iraq will fade unless Sunnis see a future for themselves in the life of their country. They need to be brought into the Iraqi Army, police, and government ministries. They need a chance to vote for their own elected representatives at the provincial level. They need to share in Iraq's oil wealth. Otherwise, the current lull in violence will be just a timeout in an unfolding sectarian war – and a future Iraq made up of gangs and warlords.

We need to move as quickly as we can to complete the training of Iraqi security forces and to transition the security mission to them. Why? Because the high-water mark for US troops in Iraq has already passed. At the direction of President Bush, US force levels will return to pre-surge levels by July 2008. The next president almost surely will reduce US troop levels further.

Polls consistently show that Iraqis and Americans both want a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Iraqi leaders want to take charge of security, and we should let them. Will it be messy? Yes, but Iraqis will have to find their own solutions, because a large US troop presence in Iraq can no longer be sustained.

We need strong US leadership in an international effort to support Iraqi reconciliation and regional stability. Why? Because Iraq cannot do it alone. Reconciliation in Iraq requires the support of all its neighbors. The neighbors, in turn, need stability in Iraq. They want to avoid spillover of the conflict, and want the 2 million-plus Iraqi refugees to return home.

US diplomatic leadership is necessary. Only the US can persuade Turkey to not invade Kurdistan. US encouragement for Saudi Arabia's quiet efforts can help sustain the "Anbar awakening." The US saw fit to invite Syria to the Annapolis peace conference: Why not now engage Syria directly on behalf of peace and reconciliation in Iraq? Iran will be the toughest challenge for diplomacy. Yet the intelligence community's reassessment of the nuclear threat offers the opportunity to pursue a dialogue with Iran anew – and topic No. 1 should be our shared interest in stability in Iraq. □

### View on war in Iraq

## Surge's success holds chance to seize the moment in Iraq

Iraq remains a violent place, but the trends are encouraging.

U.S. and Iraqi casualties are down sharply. Fewer of the most lethal Iranian-made explosive devices are being used as roadside bombs. In community after community, Sunni groups who were once in league with al-Qaeda have switched sides and are working with the U.S. forces.

On the Shiite side of Iraq's sectarian chasm, something similar is happening. About 70,000 local, pro-government groups, a bit like neighborhood watch groups, have formed to expose extremist militias, according to Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations. But as much as facts have changed on the ground, little seems to have changed in Washington. There are plans to withdraw some troops next year, but there is no clear picture of the endgame in Iraq. How long will troops be needed? Exactly what do we expect success to look like? Will we leave behind a permanent presence?

None of the answers are any clearer than they were when the news began improving. In fact, they seem fuzzier.

On the Republican side, the White House has been busy making excuses for the Iraqi government's

failure to move toward national reconciliation (which is the goal of the troop surge), and it has lowered the benchmarks for success to the level of irrelevance. That translates into reduced accountability, continued dependency and an open-ended commitment. Lowering the bar for the Iraqi government sends a message that Baghdad can enjoy security paid for in American lives, and reconstruction aid paid by America's taxpayers, and ignore its responsibilities.

Congressional Democrats, meanwhile, seem lost in a time warp. They could try to impose new benchmarks that acknowledge the military progress. Instead, too many seem unable or unwilling to admit that President Bush's surge of 30,000 more troops has succeeded beyond their initial predictions. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who in the spring declared the war lost, said last week that "the surge hasn't accomplished its goals." Anti-war Democrats remain fixated on tying war funding to a rapid troop withdrawal. Yet pulling the troops out precipitously threatens to squander the progress of recent months toward salvaging a decent outcome to the Iraq debacle.

What's needed is

acknowledgment that the surge is achieving what was intended: not complete military victory but enough stability to make political compromise possible. What's missing is Iraqi will to take advantage of the success.

So far, the Iraqis have missed just about every benchmark that Congress set early this year and Bush promised to enforce. Too often, they just don't seem to be making an effort. Those benchmarks included passing laws on sharing oil revenue, allowing more former Baath Party members into official jobs and holding provincial elections. To some degree, the positive "bottom up" developments mitigate that failure. The Sunnis, for instance, have abandoned their political isolation and now want to participate in the government. But the Shiites' persistent resistance to letting them in makes a case for new, meaningful benchmarks, not trivial certainties such as simply passing a budget, one of the requirements the White House has set.

Beyond benchmarks, the military progress has been paralleled by a less aggressive stance by Iran, creating another opening. Iran has enormous influence in Iraq, particularly in Shiite regions. □

### Opposing view

## Bring the troops home

By Maxine Waters

The fatal flaw in President Bush's "surge strategy" is that his militaristic policy in Iraq has minimized American influence and destabilized the entire region.

He has turned the Middle East into a ticking time bomb. Rather than defusing the situation with a diplomatic surge, Bush's answer, true to form, was a military surge in Iraq. Now, he defends his strategy with the same misleading rhetoric that got us into this mess in the first place.

I won't be fooled by the president's reports of progress in Iraq. The lower level of violence is a welcome change, but it serves as a distraction from the source of the chaos in Iraq: a complete lack of political reconciliation. As Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said, "Barring (national reconciliation and economic growth), no amount of troops in no amount of time will make much of a difference."

We are led to believe that resistance to our presence in Iraq stems from al-Qaeda, but insurgents don't carry membership cards with their rifles. In reality, the violence represents an age-old internal struggle for power among Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. We could place a guard in every doorway in Iraq and reduce the violence to zero, but that would be little help in the long term.

As the surge has conclusively proved, no matter how talented and brave our troops are, military action can't force the competing Iraqi factions to

settle their differences.

The lull in violence in Iraq could be short-lived without political reconciliation among the various factions.

Ultimately, our military presence might be making the situation worse, as Iraqi political leaders hide behind our troops and refuse to make compromises necessary for peace. In fact, the very things that President Bush credits with helping reduce violence — the surge in U.S. troops in Baghdad, the arming of former Sunni insurgents and the cease-fire called by radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr — inflame sectarian tensions and obstruct political compromise in Iraq. Cooperation will never occur with an enormous U.S. military occupation babysitting the current power structure.

As chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I, along with my colleagues from California, Barbara Lee and Lynn Woolsey, feel that the United States must foster peace in Iraq through diplomatic means, and not militarily.

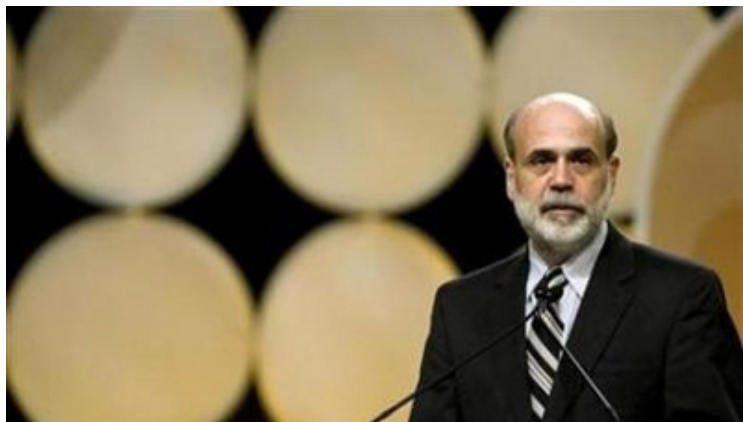
Continuing to fund the occupation at enormous cost to the taxpayers will not bring peace to Iraq, only more chaos. We advocate fully funding the safe and responsible redeployment of our troops from Iraq. Only then will the Iraqi people be able to take responsibility for their own country.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., is chairwoman of the Out of Iraq Caucus, 73 Democratic members of Congress advocating for a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. □



# BUSINESS

## Aruba TODAY



**United States Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Ben Bernanke speaks after receiving The Citizens of the Carolinas award from the Charlotte Chamber during the Charlotte Chamber Annual Meeting at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, November 29, 2007. Investor delight at a concerted central bank attempt to relieve jammed money markets fizzled out on Thursday with experts saying the credit crisis would only end when commercial banks trusted each other again.**

*(Chris Keane/Reuters)*

## Crisis has legs despite central bank endeavour

**By Mike Peacock**

Investor delight at a concerted central bank effort to relieve jammed money markets fizzled out on Thursday with experts saying the credit crisis would only end when commercial banks trusted each other again.

Interbank lending rates eased only a little from sky-high levels in response, although they edged down for the first time in over a month.

The Federal Reserve and counterparts in Europe, Canada and Britain banded together on Wednesday to cough up funds to boost liquidity in their first coordinated action since terror attacks shut U.S. financial markets on September 11, 2001.

The Fed said it would launch a "temporary term auction facility," expanding the number of banks allowed to borrow money at favorable rates.

The deal, hammered out in Cape Town at a meeting of the Group of 20 last month, also catered for affected foreign investors -- the Fed will open foreign exchange swaps for up to \$20 billion with the European Central Bank and up to \$4 billion with the Swiss National Bank (SNB).

Welcome but not enough, was the broad verdict.

Even the SNB said central banks alone could not solve the crisis, as it kept interest rates on hold.

"As long as uncertainty with respect to the scope of the credit problems exists the disruptions on the money market are likely to persist," the SNB's Thomas Jordan said.

"Central banks cannot compensate for this lack of confidence simply by injecting additional liquidity. On the contrary, the financial market participants themselves must take the fundamental steps needed to restore this confidence."

New York Federal Reserve Bank President Timothy Geithner told a conference the plan would reduce risks that liquidity problems would hurt the broader economy but said the conditions that prompted the credit crisis would take time to resolve.

Three-month euro Libor edged down to 4.94938 percent from 4.95250 percent, while one-month euro rates shed just one basis point from Wednesday's level, which was the highest since December 2000.

"Going forward, the measures will ease some of the recent tensions but are unlikely to result in a major improvement in liquidity unless financial counterparts begin to trust each other," Calyon strategists said in a note to clients. □

## Lawsuits allege milk wasn't organic

**By GENE JOHNSON**  
**Associated Press Writer**

Some of the nation's largest retailers and grocery chains sold milk labeled "organic" that was not truly organic, recently filed lawsuits allege.

The federal complaints focus on the sale of milk from Boulder, Colo.-based Aurora Organic Dairy, which recently agreed to change its practices after the U.S. Department of Agriculture found more than a dozen violations of organic standards.

The lawsuits allege that Costco Wholesale Corp., Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp., Safeway Inc. and Wild Oats Markets Inc. sold Aurora's milk under their own in-house brand names.

The brands include Costco's Kirkland and Target's Archer Farms, and the milk was sold in cartons marked "USDA organic," typically with pictures of pastures or other bucolic scenes, the lawsuits allege.

"That's not even close to the reality of where this milk was coming from," said Steve Berman, a Seattle lawyer whose firm is among those suing. "These cows are all penned in factory-confinement conditions."

Aurora denies selling non-organic

milk.

The lawsuits seek class-action status on behalf of people who bought the milk and ask for their money back as well as punitive damages and attorneys' fees.

Several of the companies declined to comment or did not respond to requests for comment, but Target, of Minneapolis, said it stands behind Aurora's organic milk.

"This lawsuit is inconsistent with the fact that the USDA has reviewed and confirmed the organic certification of Aurora dairy farms and its products," the company said in a statement.

Consumers typically pay more for organic food because they believe it is free of hormones or pesticides and produced with greater respect for the environment.

Large corporate players insist they can farm organically on a large scale, while sustainable family farms complain that such operations are not really organic and contribute to surpluses that drive down prices, making it harder for them to compete.

Aurora is one of the nation's largest dairies certified organic by the USDA.

After a progressive farm-policy organization complained about Aurora's operations, the USDA

found more than a dozen "willful violations" of the 1990 Organic Foods Production Act from 2003-06. Among them: that cows had little access to pasture, that Aurora moved its cows back and forth between conventional and organic farms, and that it sold milk as organic that did not meet federal standards.

Aurora agreed to change some of its practices in a settlement with the USDA this summer, and it has reduced the number of cows at its Platteville, Colo., facility from 4,000 to about 975, said company spokeswoman Sonja Tuitele. But it was allowed to keep its organic certification and was put on probation for a year.

Over the past 18 months, the company has also renovated its Platteville operation to increase its pastureland from 325 to 400 acres and make other improvements, Tuitele said.

"Any lawsuits claiming the milk we were selling was not organic have no merit," she said.

Aurora itself has been sued by some consumers, but lawsuits filed in federal court in Denver, Seattle, Minneapolis and San Francisco in the last two weeks are the first to accuse the retailers of misleading their customers. □

## Wholesale inflation surges, but sales up

**By MARTIN CRUTSINGER**  
**AP Economics Writer**

A record jump in gasoline prices pushed wholesale inflation up by the largest amount in 34 years. Still, shoppers stormed the malls in November, giving retail sales their biggest gain in six months.

The Labor Department said Thursday that wholesale prices soared by 3.2 percent last month, propelled by a record 34.8 percent rise in gasoline costs.

Even outside energy, inflation pressures emerged. Core inflation, which excludes energy and food, posted a 0.4 percent rise in November, double what had been expected.

Meanwhile, the Commerce Department reported that retail sales jumped by 1.2 percent last month, double the gain economists had expected. It was the biggest increase in six months and followed a much weaker 0.2 percent rise in retail sales in October.

The big rise in inflation demonstrated the pressures facing the Federal Reserve, which is trying to combat a sharp slowdown in economic growth while at the same time making sure that inflation does not get out of hand.

At the White House, press secretary Dana Perino said that one bad report on inflation "doesn't make a trend." But she said officials were "keeping a watchful eye on it. Inflation has remained remarkably low, even in the face of high energy prices. We're confident that Chairman Bernanke takes price

stability seriously and considers the risk of inflation in the Fed's policy decisions."

In another Commerce Department report, business inventories grew by just 0.1 percent in October. That was far below the 0.4 percent rise that had been expected and was the weakest showing since inventories were unchanged in March.

The small rise in inventories was seen as an effort by companies to control inventories in advance of an expected period of sluggish growth.

Analysts said the big rise in inflation demonstrated the pressures facing the Federal Reserve, which is trying to combat a sharp slowdown in economic growth while at the same time making sure that inflation does not get out of hand.

The stronger-than-expected gain in retail sales should ease worries that the country could be in danger of tumbling into a full-blown recession. However, analysts cautioned that the November sales figure was inflated by heavy discounting in the week following Thanksgiving. Sales data in early December reflect weaker activity, they said.

"December will be hard work for retailers in the wake of the plunge in consumer confidence," said Ian Shepherdson, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics. Half of the November increase in retail sales came from a big jump in gasoline pump prices and therefore was not seen as a sign of strength in consumer demand. □



# SPORTS

## Aruba TODAY

### Lakers coach Jackson signs extension



Los Angeles Lakers coach Phil Jackson signed a two-year contract extension Wednesday believed to be worth about \$24 million, keeping him on the bench through the 2009-10 season.

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### AC Milan beat Urawa 1-0 to reach Club World Cup final



Italian powerhouses AC Milan lived up to their pre-tournament promise by beating Urawa Red Diamonds 1-0 to reach the final against Boca Juniors in the Club World Cup on Thursday.

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### Cubs reach agreement with Japanese star



The Cubs reeled in another marquee free agent, reaching a preliminary agreement with Japanese star Kosuke Fukudome on a four-year, \$48 million deal to be their right fielder.

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## Clemens, Pettitte named in Mitchell report



Former Senator George Mitchell (L) speaks at a news conference held by Major League Baseball and Commissioner Bud Selig to announce its investigation into past steroid use by Major League players in New York City March 30, 2006. The keenly anticipated Mitchell Report on steroids usage in Major League Baseball will be issued on Thursday, fueling hope the record will be set straight on a suspected doping era in the sport.

(Peter Foley/Reuters)

By RONALD BLUM  
AP Baseball Writer

Seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens and Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte were the first names to emerge Thursday from the Mitchell report.

ESPN.com reported Brian McNamee, a former trainer for the Yankees and Clemens, told investigators he supplied Clemens and Pettitte with steroids and that information is in the report. The Web site cited an unidentified source close to the trainer.



Tiger Woods seen with his new signature sports drink, Gatorade Tiger, which he's using for the first time this week at the Target World Challenge in Thousand Oaks, California. 'I'm excited about my new partnership with Gatorade, and I wanted the first time that I used it to be at my own tournament,' said Woods. Gatorade Tiger launches nationwide in March 2008.

(PRNewsFoto/Gatorade)

"After we read the report, we will have something to say," said Randy Hendricks, the agent for Clemens and Pettitte.

The Los Angeles Times reported in 2006 that Clemens and Pettitte were among the players former major league pitcher Jason Grimsley accused of using performance-enhancing drugs, according to a federal agent's affidavit. Clemens and Pettitte have denied the allegations. On Wednesday, Pettitte said "I've not heard a word from anyone" about former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell's investigation.

Citing two lawyers familiar with the investigation, The New York Times reported McNamee also provided information about retired first baseman David Segui. On Monday, Segui admitted he used steroids and purchased shipments from former New York Mets clubhouse attendant Kirk Radomski.

Mitchell's report exposes a "serious drug culture within baseball, from top to bottom," fingers MVPs and All-Stars and calls for beefed-up testing by an outside agency to clean up the game.

The report by Mitchell will include names of 60 to 80 players linked to performance-enhancing substances and plenty more information that exposes "deep problems" afflicting the sport, one of two sources with knowledge of the findings told the AP. Both sources said the report would not address amphetamines.

The two sources were familiar with discussions that led to the final draft but did not want to be identified because it was confidential until its scheduled release. They said the full report, which they had not read, totaled 304 pages plus exhibits.

One person familiar with the final version would only speak anonymously but described it as "a very thorough treatment of the subject" and said some aspects were surprising. He said the report assigns blame to both the commissioner's office and the players' union.

MLB's "not going to love it, the union's not going to love it," he said.

Continued on Page 20

## Woods says drug testing to start July 8

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods said Wednesday that drug testing on the PGA Tour will start July 8, and he is about halfway through the tour's anti-doping manual sent to players earlier this month.

"It's unbelievable how thick this thing is," Woods said after his pro-am round at the Target World Challenge, the final tournament of the year. "It's a lot to get through. I haven't gotten to the drug list yet."

But he's not worried about the testing, which will start the Tuesday after his AT&T National at Congressional, saying he has been on the same nutritional program for years.

"I think it will help," Woods said of drug testing. "I certainly don't think it can hurt the game."

The tour released an outline of the drug policy last month, and it sent players a comprehensive manual on Dec. 1. That was the first step in an intensive education program that will extend through June. Players must attend a drug policy meeting in January, and they will have access to a 24-hour hotline for questions about various substances.

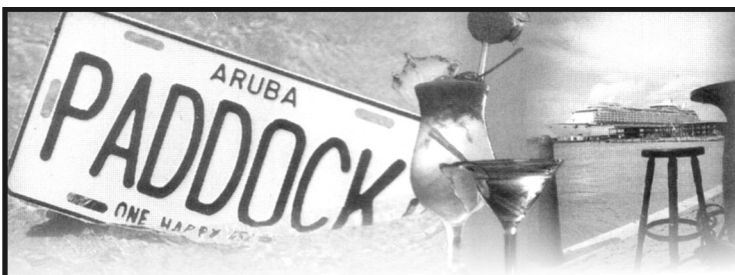
Not everyone has started plowing through the manual.

Masters champion Zach Johnson said he sent his to his trainer, and wasn't aware there was a mandatory meeting in January.

Jim Furyk started to read the manual online, but didn't make it very far.

"It was like 41 pages," he said. "I got to page 2 on the Blackberry and realized there were 39 more pages to go. Forty-one pages of that? I don't think I can do it. I may read it if I feel it's necessary. For me, the idea is to make sure we go to the workshops and have all the people in place to help us out." □





## THE PADDOCK-WEEK

### SUNDAY

LIVE MUSIC AT 11PM BY  
**CRISTAL BREEZE**  
11PM TILL 01AM \$2-BAR  
**ALL-U-CAN-EAT**  
**BURGERS for \$10**

### MONDAY

#### LIVE MUSIC

ENJOY A RELAXED AND CASUAL DINNER  
ON OUR TERRACE WITH A BEAUTIFULL  
VIEW OF THE SUNSET.

### TUESDAY

#### LIVE MUSIC

2 FOR TUESDAY HAPPY HOUR  
FROM 11PM TILL MIDNIGHT  
**"ASK ONE-GET-TWO"**

### WEDNESDAY

#### ALL U CAN EAT RIBS

only \$13 starting at 5pm  
Student Night All Drinks **\$1.50**  
11pm to 1am

### THURSDAY

#### Live Music

#### "DUTCH MEAL"

Weekly something different

### FRIDAY

**DUTCH HAPPY HOUR from 5 till 7pm**  
Half Price on 1 BEER and 1 MIX DRINKS!  
**FREE SNACKS!!**

### SATURDAY

#### ASK ONE - GET - TWO

1/2 PRICE ON  
SELECTED BEER AND  
MIXED DRINKS

We serve Breakfast at 8:30am  
**EVERY DAY**



#### CLEMENS

*Continued from Previous Page*

In an e-mail sent to agents Thursday, the union said it would get a copy of the report at 1 p.m. "based on our pledge not to disclose its contents before 2 p.m."

"We suggest that, for today at least, you decline general comment on the report and respond only on behalf of a particular player named in the report," the union told the agents.

One source said that while the report will cite problems "top to bottom," it also will expose "deep problems, the number of players, high-level MVPs and All-Stars," as well as clubhouse personnel who allowed steroids and other banned substances in clubhouses or knew about it and didn't say anything.

The rest of the report, the sources said, focuses on recommendations that include enhanced year-round testing and hiring a drug-testing company that uses the highest standards of independence and transparency. Baseball's program currently is overseen by a joint management-union Health Policy Advisory Committee, with an independent administrator approved by both sides.

Mitchell, a Boston Red Sox director, planned to release his report at 2 p.m. Thursday during a news conference in New York City. Baseball commissioner Bud Selig was to hold his own news conference a few blocks away 2 1/2 hours later.

The report comes at the end of a year when San Francisco Giants outfielder Barry Bonds broke the career home run record, only to be indicted 100 days later on charges of lying to a federal grand jury about steroid use.

It also was expected to recommend that baseball develop a credible program to handle cases with evidence of athletes receiving or taking drugs but not testing positive for them.

Just last week, Kansas City's Jose Guillen and Baltimore's Jay Gibbons were suspended for the first 15 days of next season, and media reports said they had obtained human growth hormone in 2005, after baseball banned it. Much of the first part of the report will be based on evidence obtained from Radomski, and from information gleaned from the Albany district attorney's



investigation into illegal drug distribution that focused on Signature Pharmacy of Orlando, Fla., the sources said.

Radomski was required to cooperate with the investigation as a condition of his federal plea agreement last April. Radomski pleaded guilty to illegally distributing steroids, HGH, amphetamines and other drugs to players and is awaiting sentencing. Some professional athletes have been linked to the Signature probe, though none have been charged.

On Thursday morning at Radomski's Long Island, N.Y.-based business, Pro Touch Detail Center, a man who identified himself as Radomski told The Associated Press: "I have no comment. Talk to my lawyer. This is private property. Please leave."

Rob Manfred, baseball's executive vice president of labor relations, reviewed at least part of the report this week to ensure no confidential information from the drug-testing program was disclosed, a person with knowledge of the union's discussion with Mitchell said, also on condition of anonymity. Despite repeated requests by the players' association to Mitchell's law firm, the union had not been allowed to review the report, that person said.

"I certainly hope after 21 months and getting zip by way of cooperation from the players' association that they'll come up with some recommendations for improvement," said World Anti-Doping Agency chairman Dick Pound. "If not, it's a complete waste of time."

But he said he's not sure baseball would follow any recommendations.

"My guess is that the management side probably would, but the players' association will dig in

and continue its steel-town union approach to life," he said.

Agents have said they expect the report to be highly critical of players and the union for largely refusing to cooperate with Mitchell.

Bob DuPuy, baseball's chief operating officer, sent an e-mail to owners and team presidents in advance of the report with instructions how to respond to media inquiries.

"We look forward to carefully reading the results of Sen. Mitchell's investigation," the recommended response said. "Protecting the integrity of our game is vital, and we intend to study his findings and recommendations, and will not comment until we have done so."

Baseball did not have an agreement to ban steroids until September 2002, did not have testing with penalties until 2004 and did not ban HGH until 2005, when it also instituted a suspension for a first positive test.

Mitchell was hired by Selig in March 2006 after the publication of "Game of Shadows," a book by two San Francisco Chronicle reporters about Bonds' alleged steroid use. The rise in power in the 1990s, which drew national attention when Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa chased Roger Maris' single-season record in the Great Home Run Race of 1998, was accompanied by a rise in suspicion.

Maris' record of 61 homers had stood since 1961, but McGwire hit 70 that year and Sosa had 66. During the chase, the AP reported McGwire had used androstenedione, a supplement then available over the counter that produced testosterone.

A bulked-up Bonds then shattered McGwire's record by hitting 73 homers in 2001. □



## "FAVI FUNDACION CU VISION"



# Jets taped during playoff game vs. Pats

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr  
AP Sports Writer

The spy games between the New York Jets and New England Patriots began last season.

The Jets were caught videotaping at Gillette Stadium last season and the Patriots had that New York employee removed from the area, according to published reports Wednesday. Jets coach Eric Mangini said his team received permission to film behind both end zones during the playoff game in January.

“We taped the game, is what we taped, and we taped end-zone copy of the game, and we tape a double end zone, which is standard operating procedure for us,” Mangini said Wednesday. “We request that every single road game, and it’s usually granted if physically it’s possible. And when people request it from us, we do the same thing: We grant it.”

Mangini maintained the Jets did nothing wrong, and had filmed at New England during the regular season without incident. It was nothing like what the Patriots did earlier this season, when a New England employee was caught taping New York’s defensive signals and punished by the league.

“We do it every time we go on the road,” Mangini repeated. “We ask for permission to do it. It’s within the league rules, and when people ask us to do it, we grant it, as well.”

When asked why the Patriots stopped the Jets if they had already given them permission, Mangini just shrugged.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Really, it just was what it was. We had asked for permission, it was granted and then that changed, and we respect their decision. It’s their stadium.”

Mangini was also asked if the Jets were, at all, taping the Patriots’ defensive signals.

“No,” Mangini said smugly.

He was then asked if the Patriots requested similar permission to have someone taping at various angles or end-zone angles. Again, Mangini replied simply: “No.”

The Jets have not asked the undefeated Patriots if they can film from the end zones this Sunday at Foxborough.

“Just didn’t look to get permission,” Mangini said. “Didn’t think it would be granted.”

New England coach Bill Belichick refused to address the situation during his news conference with Patriots reporters.

“There’s a lot of things that have happened in the past,” Belichick said. “Really, the past is in the past.”

Patriots players were also staying away from the issue, much as they did when Pittsburgh’s Anthony Smith guaranteed a victory over New England last week.

“It just doesn’t matter. Who cares?” safety Rodney Harrison said. “It has no impact whatsoever, just like when Smith made his comments. It has no impact. The game isn’t won or lost through the media Monday through Saturday. It’s won or lost on Sunday, 1 o’clock. It’s whoever makes more plays.”

This is just the latest in the long-running rivalry between the teams. After helping Belichick and the Patriots win three Super Bowls as a defensive assistant, Mangini left to become coach of the Jets. The relationship between the two has been frosty since.

Things got even chillier after a Patriots video assistant was caught taping from the sidelines during their game against the Jets in Week 1, a move some speculated fueled New England’s drive to perfection. The NFL punished the Patriots by taking away their first-round draft pick, fined them \$250,000 and fined



New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick turns to walk away from his podium at the conclusion of his media availability at the team’s football facility in Foxborough, Mass., Wednesday morning, Dec. 12, 2007. The Patriots will play the New York Jets in an AFC divisional game in Foxborough Sunday.

(AP Photo/Stephan Savoia)

Belichick another \$500,000.

A league rule prohibits teams from using a video camera on the sidelines for any purpose. In the Jets’ case, they were filming from the end zone. The Jets film from both end zones during practice, a common procedure used by NFL teams.

“When you practice, anytime you practice, you try to shoot the unit from the sideline and then from the end zone behind them, so that you can see hand placement, fits, that type of thing,” Mangini said. “That’s how you watch practice every day. That’s how you

evaluate practice every day. And it’s the same thing with games. You like to have that same copy because, really, that’s just an extension of the evaluation.”

Mangini was unsure how many teams have asked for similar permission from New York, but said the Jets have granted it to those that have. He also said the Jets have not been turned down by any teams this season.

“It’s usually just a function of whether there’s a location that we can do it from or not,” he said. “It’s a pretty common courtesy.” □



New York Yankees’ Alex Rodriguez dons his batting helmet to take batting practice before Game 3 of the Yankees’ American League baseball division playoff series against the Cleveland Indians at Yankee Stadium in New York, in this Oct. 7, 2007 file photo.

(AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

By RONALD BLUM  
AP Baseball Writer

Alex Rodriguez set another record for baseball’s highest contract, finalizing his \$275 million, 10-year agreement with the New York Yankees on Thursday.

A-Rod set the previous mark with his \$252 million, 10-year deal with Texas in December 2000. Traded to the Yankees in 2004, he opted out of that contract Oct. 28, during the final game of the World Series.

Yankees senior vice president

# A-Rod, Yankees finalize \$275M deal

Hank Steinbrenner said New York would not negotiate further with Rodriguez because his decision eliminated the \$21.3 million subsidy the Yankees were to receive from Texas from 2008-10, a figure negotiated at the time of the trade.

But Rodriguez then approached the Yankees through a managing director at Goldman Sachs and negotiated his new deal in early November without agent Scott Boras.

“It seemed like the whole thing was a roller-coaster. It was very emotional,” Rodriguez said on a conference call. “All along, I knew I wanted to be a Yankee.” Rodriguez said opting out was “a mistake that was handled extremely poorly.”

“It was a huge debacle,” he said, calling the timing “distasteful and very inappropriate.”

A-Rod said Boras gave him the impression the Yankees weren’t interested in bringing him back, which surprised him.

“Our goals were not aligned,” Rodriguez said. “It felt funny to me.”

He said he and Boras agreed the slugger would opt out of his deal, but Rodriguez thought the move would be revealed after the World

Series.

“I made mistakes. I’ve got to look in the mirror. If I had to do it again, I would’ve called Hank from Day 1 and negotiated myself,” Rodriguez said.

But he soon called Steinbrenner. “If he hung up on me, I wouldn’t have been surprised. I thought my career was over with the Yankees,” Rodriguez said.

He said once he did get in touch with Steinbrenner and his brother Hal, an executive vice president with the Yankees, it didn’t take long to reach an agreement.

“Within two conversations we got a deal done,” Rodriguez said.

His new contract allows A-Rod to earn \$30 million more for achieving historic milestones. He is 18th on the career list with 518 homers, 244 shy of Barry Bonds’ record.

Rodriguez won his third AL Most Valuable Player award last month after hitting .314 with 54 homers and 156 RBIs. But he’s frequently been a target for boo birds at Yankee Stadium — due in large part to his postseason struggles.

“I have a lot to prove in New York,” said Rodriguez, who has never reached the World Series. “I think the criticism is what comes with being in New York.”

A-Rod gets a \$10 million signing bonus, of which \$2 million is payable upon approval by the commissioner’s office, \$1 million each Jan. 15 from 2009-13 and \$3 million on Jan. 15, 2014.

Rodriguez receives salaries of \$27 million next year, \$32 million in 2009 and 2010, \$31 million in 2011, \$29 million in 2012, \$28 million in 2013, \$25 million in 2014, \$21 million in 2015 and \$20 million in each of the final two years.

His \$32 million salaries in 2009 and 2010 will be the largest

for one season in major league history.

Rodriguez could receive an additional \$6 million each for five milestones that the team designates as historic achievements. They are contemplated to be tying the home run marks of Willie Mays (660), Babe Ruth (714), Hank Aaron (755) and Bonds, and breaking Bonds’ major league record.

Under the deal he opted out of, A-Rod earned \$185.45 million over seven years. □





# AC Milan beat Urawa 1-0 to reach Club World Cup final

Italian powerhouses AC Milan lived up to their pre-tournament promise by beating Urawa Red Diamonds 1-0 to reach the final against Boca Juniors in the Club World Cup on Thursday.

Brazilian striker Kaka, who won the prestigious French Ballon d'Or for the Player of the Year, produced a pin-point cross from the left for midfielder Clarence Seedorf's goal in the 68th minute.

Boca, the Argentine giants, beat Etoile Sahel of Tunisia in the other semi-final on Wednesday to meet Milan who are aiming for the first Club World Cup for Europe.

"I knew Kaka would cross the ball back. So I went straight into the line," Dutchman Seedorf said. "I was concentrated to kick it good, keep it low and that was good."

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "Boca Juniors are a different type of team from Urawa. They are opponents who have experience and history."

"But we came here to bring the Cup to Europe. We just try hard to accomplish our goal," he added.

"I expect Boca Juniors to play aggressive, they are not a defensive team. For us, it's important to win the trophy. Both teams try to win the Cup. It will be a more difficult game than against Urawa. But we have high motivation."

Although the European champions allowed Urawa to hit the first couple of shots at goal, they took control after 10 minutes with Andrea Pirlo firing a shot from a free kick, which keeper Ryota Tsuzuki dived to save.

Soon afterwards, skipper Massimo Ambrosini just missed a header from a left corner, and then Pirlo and Ambrosini failed to find the net, while Massimo Oddo lacked accuracy in his cross from the right.

Roared on by a partisan home crowd, Urawa fought back bravely before the break, but Takahito Soma's shots were too long and Keita Suzuki's shot from the edge of the area was saved by Brazilian keeper Dida. AC Milan dominated the second



**AC Milan forward Filippo Inzaghi (L) and Japan's Urawa Reds defender Nene fight for the ball in the second half of the semi-final of the Club World Cup in Tokyo. Italian powerhouses AC Milan lived up to their pre-tournament promise by beating Urawa Red Diamonds 1-0 to reach the final against Boca Juniors.**

(AFP/Kazuhiro Nogi)

half, attacking the Japanese goal repeatedly with shots by Marek Jankulovski, Seedorf, Kaka and Alberto Gilardino.

And it was just a question of when the Italians would score the first goal.

"The game would have been different if we scored earlier," Seedorf said. "Urawa did a good job against us. They made our life difficult."

Kaka said he saw Seedorf and striker Filippo Inzaghi in front of the goal. "I fed the ball to Seedorf because he was more ready to catch it."

"We must prepare ourselves for the final as anything could happen," he said. "We made a few mistakes and we need to readjust ourselves."

Urawa's German coach Holger Osieck was proud of his team's performance despite the defeat, saying: "I congratulated my players in the dressing room for their gutsy and good performances."

"I think basically we represented the Japanese football well in this tournament, particularly in this game. Now we have another incentive, another game on Sunday. Of course, we want to finish third."

That's our target, so we are looking ahead, we are not looking back. We'll see what Sunday brings."□

# Cubs reach agreement with Japanese star

By RICK GANO

AP Sports Writer

The Cubs reeled in another marquee free agent, reaching a preliminary agreement with Japanese star Kosuke Fukudome on a four-year, \$48 million deal to be their right fielder.

It was just last offseason the Cubs went on a \$300 million spending spree, the bulk of that on an eight-year, \$136 million contract for free agent Alfonso Soriano. Chicago went on to win the NL Central but was swept out of the playoffs in the first round by the Arizona Diamondbacks.

The Cubs made another major move Wednesday night when they declined to offer a 2008 contract to former star right-hander Mark Prior, an 18-game winner in 2003 whose career has been sidetracked by injuries. He becomes a free agent.

In Fukudome, they have added a needed left-handed bat who can get on base, hit with power, run and play strong defense.

"He's been our target acquisition from day one," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said Wednesday when the Cubs announced the deal pending Fukudome passing a physical next week in Chicago.

Considered one of the best outfielders in Japanese baseball, the 30-year-old slugger was a key member of the team that won the inaugural World Baseball Classic in March 2006.

He had surgery on his right elbow in August and sat out the Japan Series, but has 192 homers and a .305 batting average and .397 on-base percentage over nine seasons with the Chunichi Dragons, who won their first championship in 53 years on Nov. 2.

Hendry said the Cubs medical staff is convinced Fukudome's elbow will be fine and he will be ready for the first day of spring

training.

Fukudome drew interest from the Cubs, San Diego Padres and White Sox.

"Kosuke did have offers that economically were potentially better, but there are a lot of elements that played a role in his decision," agent Joe Urbon said. "Position, city, ability to win and being the first Japanese player on a club. All those things played a role. ... Of course economics played a role."

And so did Lou Piniella's experience in Seattle handling Japanese players. He managed Ichiro Suzuki and Shigetoshi Hasegawa.

Fukudome will fill a big need for the Cubs, who declined their contract option on veteran Cliff Floyd and traded outfielder Jacque Jones to Detroit.

The Cubs have right-handed power with Soriano, Derrek Lee and Aramis Ramirez. But with the loss of Floyd and Jones, punch from the other side of the plate was lacking. That's why Hendry said he told Urbon the team would respect Fukudome's timeframe in deciding whether to leave Japan. "This was option 1-2-3 as far as we were concerned," Hendry said. "We couldn't be happier. He changes the dynamics of our club."

Hendry said it would be up Piniella to decide where in the order Fukudome bats, but that he could fit anywhere from second to fifth because he combines a high on-base percentage with the ability to hit home runs.

Fukudome was the 2006 Central League MVP, batting .351 with 31 homers and 104 RBIs. He won two batting titles and four gold gloves. Soriano returns in left and speedy prospect Felix Pie is expected to take over in center after shuttling between the majors and minors last season.



**Japan's Kosuke Fukudome is celebrated by coach Sumio Hirota, unseen, after hitting a solo shot off China's Zhao Quansheng in the fifth inning of their Asia Round game of the World Baseball Classic at Tokyo Dome in Tokyo in this March 3, 2006 file photo. Fukudome and the Chicago Cubs reached a preliminary agreement Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2007, on a \$48 million, four-year contract.**

(AP Photo/Junji Kurokawa, File)

Hendry said he doesn't expect there to be a difficult transition period for Fukudome. He will, however, have to learn the tricky right field corner at Wrigley Field while dealing with the sun, wind and cold at the neighborhood park that's so close to Lake Michigan. "This guy wants to play here. He wants the action. He's looking forward to it," Hendry said.

"He knows how good a player he is and he demonstrates it in the way he plays." Fukudome will join the Cubs just as they are about to get a new owner. The sale from Tribune Co. is expected some time in the first half of next year. □



**Los Angeles Lakers center Andrew Bynum dunks the ball during the first half of their NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors, Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007, in Los Angeles. The Lakers won 123-113.**

(AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill)

# Lakers coach Jackson signs extension

Los Angeles Lakers coach Phil Jackson signed a two-year contract extension Wednesday believed to be worth about \$24 million, keeping him on the bench through the 2009-10 season.

The Hall of Fame coach had previously announced the extension Nov. 30.

"Nobody has been more successful from the sideline in the history of this game than Phil and his record obviously speaks for itself," general manager Mitch Kupchak said. "We're excited to have a coach of his experience, stature and ability leading this team for the foreseeable future."

The 62-year-old Jackson signed a five-year, \$30 million contract with the Lakers in June 1999, and coached them to three championships before they lost to San Antonio in the Western Conference semifinals in 2003 and were beaten by Detroit in the NBA finals in 2004.

Jackson and the team parted ways in June 2004, and he took a year off before signing a three-year, \$30 million contract — the richest deal for an NBA coach — in June 2005.

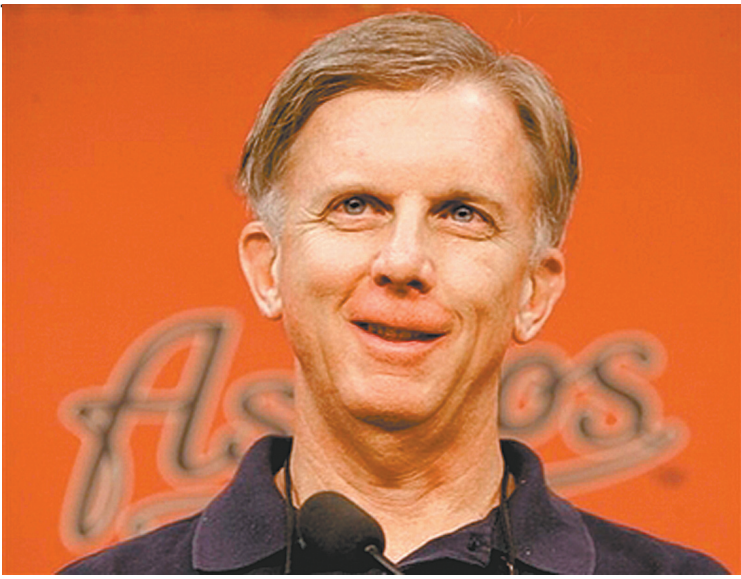
"I enjoy working with the players and staff of this team, as well as the management and ownership," Jackson said Wednesday in a statement.

He and late Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach each have earned a record nine championship rings as a head coach. Jackson guided the Michael Jordan-led Chicago Bulls to six titles in the 1990s before taking a year off from coaching and then joining the Lakers before the 1999-2000 season. □



THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION





**Houston Astros general manager Ed Wade announces that the baseball club has acquired infielder Miguel Tejada from the Baltimore Orioles Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007 in Houston. The Astros traded five players for the former All-Star shortstop.**

(AP Photo/Pat Sullivan)

## Tejada traded to Orioles for 5 players

Miguel Tejada got his wish — albeit a couple of years later than he wanted. Tejada was traded from the Baltimore Orioles to the Houston Astros for five players on Wednesday, giving the 2002 AL MVP a fresh start on a team looking to boost its lineup.

The Orioles got outfielder Luke Scott, pitchers Matt Albers, Troy Patton and Dennis Sarfate, and third baseman Michael Costanzo for the four-time All-Star shortstop.

Two winters ago, Tejada caused a stir in Baltimore when he said he was unhappy with the Orioles' direction and wanted to be traded. He later backed off that stance.

"I feel very happy with this trade, because it's something that I've been really looking forward to," Tejada told The Associated Press by telephone from Miami.

Houston general manager Ed Wade said the Astros couldn't pass up the opportunity to add Tejada.

"The reality is when you are talking about a player of this magnitude, you have to go in with every expectation that the asking price is going to be very high and if you want to participate, it's going to be tough," he said. Tejada hit .296 with 18 home runs and 81 RBIs this season. In 11 seasons, he has hit .287 with 258 home runs and 1,033 RBIs. His home run total ranks him fourth all-time among shortstops.

"This is a big day for us. We got a big bat to our lineup," Wade said. Tejada is 31, and the Orioles were worried about his range at shortstop. He had resisted their efforts to move him over to third base.

Wade said while Tejada may not cover quite as much ground as he once did, the Astros are confident he'll be solid at shortstop. Adam Everett, Houston's shortstop this season, will become an unrestricted free agent by Thursday, Wade said.

In 2005, Tejada came under scrutiny after teammate Rafael Palmeiro tested positive for steroids. Palmeiro said Tejada gave him vitamin B-12 that might have been tainted with performance-enhancing drugs. Tejada denied any steroid use and his name has not been linked to any wrongdoing. Wade refused to make any comment on that subject.

"I'm not addressing the steroid issue," he said.

When asked if it was a coincidence that the deal for Tejada was announced a day before former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell's report on drug use in baseball was to be released, Wade said, "the deal was announced today because we finished it this morning." Wade joked that he had no idea what would be in Mitchell's report.

"Barnes & Noble didn't send me my advanced copy," he said.

Tejada said he figures he'll adjust easily to the National League, and that the cozy ballpark dimensions in Houston will benefit him.

"I was in Houston last week and I've played in Minute Maid Park in the All-Star game, so I think I'll do great in that city," Tejada said.

The 2002 AL MVP with Oakland is owed \$13 million in each of the next two years, the final seasons of a \$72 million, six-year contract.

The trade was the latest big move by Wade, who took over as GM in September. Houston finished 73-89, two years after reaching the World Series for the first time.

Earlier this month, the Astros finalized their \$16.5 million, three-year contract with free-agent second baseman Kaz Matsui. He's expected to bat second behind new leadoff man Michael Bourn, acquired in November as part of a trade that sent reliever Brad Lidge to Philadelphia. □

# Wariner back in running for Golden League jackpot

American one-lap wonder Jeremy Wariner will be in with a real shot at the one-million-dollar Golden League jackpot next season after organisers brought in the 400m as one of the 10 headlining events. Wariner, the Olympic and world champion, missed out last season after the 400m was taken off the roster of disciplines counting for the jackpot.

The men's disciplines for next season will now be the 100m, 400m, 1500m, 400m hurdles, long jump, and javelin, while the women have had their events cut by one and will now compete in the 200m, 800m, 100m hurdles, and high jump.

"With three new disciplines in 2008, our goal is to provide an attractive range of events which will help us to promote some of the most exciting talents in our sport," said Lamine Diack, president of world athletics' governing body, the IAAF.

Athletes will have to remain unbeaten in all six meetings to grab a share of the total jackpot of one million dollars.

The IAAF added that if none of the athletes from the 10



**American one-lap wonder Jeremy Wariner, seen here in September 2007, will be in with a real shot at the one-million-dollar Golden League jackpot next season after organisers brought in the 400m as one of the 10 headlining events.**

(AFP/File/Janek Skarzynski)

disciplines manage to finish the series unbeaten, it would award 500,000 dollars to be shared out between the athletes who win five of the six meetings.

World champion pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva of Russia and American 400 metres

runner Sanya Richards shared last season's jackpot after both registered six wins out of six.

Golden League disciplines  
Men: 100m, 400m, 1500m, 400m hurdles, long jump, javelin  
Women: 200m, 800m, 100m hurdles, high jump □

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## AHATA names Menno van der Straten Hotel Supervisor of the Year 2007



EAGLE BEACH — On Friday, November 30, the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) presented its 2007 Shoco Awards of Excellence to eight very deserving members of the island's hospitality industry.

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## Sea Aruba Fly'n Dive wraps up successful IDC, instructor development course



ORANJESTAD — Owner John Oster joined the celebration at Havana Beach Club to congratulate new Padi certified dive instructors. Course instructor Steve Vanderauwera from F&D was in charge of the curriculum, coaching 7 international students ranging in age from 27 to 68.

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# Traditional houses at Sero Preto illuminated once again

Page B9



## Year-end get-together for the Visibility Team



Page B11



**AHATA names  
Pricewaterhouse  
Coopers Aruba  
the Allied  
Member  
of the Year 2007**

Page B4



Discover the best-kept secret in Aruba

# Seafood Paella with free sangria at Destiny!

Tempting special tonight at Aruba Destiny



**PALM BEACH-** The Aruban Family-owned restaurant; Aruba Destiny, is located by the Dutch Windmill, in front of the Mill Resort. The owners Erna and Rolando Solognier with son Orlando, started the restaurant two years ago and tastefully designed and decorated the interior to create a romantic, cozy atmosphere with delightful music. A colorful terrace romantic under the stars, is also very inviting. The menu at Aruba Destiny features some very popular items like Coconut Grouper; which is the restaurants' signature dish, the seafood paella, Cabrito Stoba, Keshi Jena and Sirloin Steak all prepared the Aruban way. Most dishes are served with pan bati (a native cornbread), funchi (Aruban fried polenta), fried plantains and fresh sautéed vegetables. Also quite the attractions here are the seafood dishes, ranging from Fruits of the Ocean and king crab to Chilean Sea bass and a red snapper fillet pan fried with garlic shrimp. Erna is already



very famous for her desserts on the island. They began a cake business before they went in to the restaurant business, so Aruban desserts are in high demand at the restaurant. The cashew nut cake is a real must-try because it is very Aruban and simply wonderful. Some guest comments include "Best meal ever in Aruba" and "A complete dining pleasure". Tonight's special includes a great seafood paella served with a glass of the

best red or white sangria on the island for only \$19.95 and gratuity is not included. The Solognier family would love to welcome you tonight for a unique dining experience and son Orlando as waiter would love to show you some Aruban hospitality. Please call for more information or reservations at 586-1100 or 568-6493 (Erna's number). Destiny is open Monday to Saturday from 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Sundays closed. □

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# AHATA names Menno van der Straten Hotel Supervisor of the Year 2007



EAGLE BEACH — On Friday, November 30, the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) presented its 2007 Shoco Awards of Excellence to eight very deserving members of the island's hospitality industry. Menno van der Straten, Landscaping Manager for Aruba's five Divi Resorts and Golf Course Superintendent of The Links at Divi Aruba, was presented with a beautiful Shoco Award of Excellence after being named by AHATA as the Hotel Supervisor of the Year 2007. In fact, Menno was nominated for the award by the general managers of all five Divi Resorts: Divi Aruba Beach Resort, Tamarijn Aruba Beach Resort, Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort, Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort, and Divi Dutch Village Resort.

One of Menno's outstanding qualities that caught the eyes of the judges is his hunger for challenge. Before joining the Divi team, Menno worked at the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino. At that time, he had heard that a new golf course was going to be built by the Divi in October 2004. This new challenge and the desire to "grow into" the new golf course lured him to Divi, where he has been for almost five years now.

With 54 landscaping crew members working under

him, an entire golf course to keep green and trimmed to 3 mm every day, and five different resort grounds to oversee, Menno has no easy job. However, Menno has devised several means of making certain that his golf course and resort grounds are some of the greenest on the island—a difficult feat in Aruba's arid climate. First of all, he sends his landscaping crew members to receive training at Fantastic Gardens so that they have the best possible knowledge of how to work with plants particular to our tropical climate. It is no secret that watering plants, digging holes, and cutting back plants and grass can be rather monotonous and perpetual work, so Menno also created a special way to motivate his charges by establishing competitions between his several grounds crews. Each team is allowed a budget for plants and tools, presents its ideas to Menno on how to upgrade the landscaping of its respective Divi resort, and makes the approved changes. The winner of the competition is awarded a paid day off at De Palm Tours. Menno understands well that if he gives to his workers, they will give back.

Menno's travels to Tanzania



and Ghana, where he worked for Habitat for Humanity, instilled in him the spirit of volunteering. He brought that spirit with him to Aruba, where he is a key player of the Stima Bo Barrio project, beach cleanups, and recycling competitions. He recently led a successful garden cleanup at the Dakota YMCA. Menno is a member of AHATA's environmental committee and has implemented some green efforts on the golf course, which is irrigated

with recycled water. Menno is also active in the church community and every year, volunteers as a Zwart Piet to accompany Sinter Klaus at schools.

Menno appreciates his Shoco Award of Excellence for two reasons: it helps to bring landscaping, which is a behind-the-scenes department, to the forefront, and it also recognizes not only his outstanding feats, but those of his very dedicated workers as well.

Menno, always looking for the next big challenge, does not have to go far because Divi Resorts are always expanding and reinventing themselves. With new projects on the horizon, Menno looks forward to creating new landscaping environments. Though the view from Windows on Aruba is going to be hard to beat, if anyone can do it, Menno can. Congratulations, Menno, for doing an outstanding job of helping to sustain Aruba's hospitality industry. □

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## AHATA names PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba the Allied Member of the Year 2007

EAGLE BEACH — On November 30, the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) presented its 2007 Shoco Awards of Excellence to eight phenomenal members of Aruba's hospitality industry. PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba, a signature alliance partner of AHATA, was recognized with a Shoco Award as the Allied Member of the Year 2007.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Netherlands Antilles and Aruba has seven partners and four offices, one office on each of the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and St. Martin. In the Aruba office, motivated and talented tax lawyers and tax consultants work hard to provide the firm's clients with quality assurance, tax, and advisory services. According to Hans Ruiter, one of the partners of PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba, quality is what his company sells. As a member of PricewaterhouseCoopers International, the Aruba branch is dedicated to adhering to the highest professional and ethical standards. With its guarantee of the highest quality and customer satisfaction, Mr. Ruiter is confident that PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba will always beat its competition on the island. PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba is making a significant impact on the way that business is carried out in various sectors of the island, including the hospitality and entertainment industries. Since many of the firm's clients are high- and low-rise hotels, PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba is doing its part to help sustain the hospitality industry on the island.

The firm also takes excellent care of its employees, who enjoy company family days, holiday celebrations, and island-wide scavenger hunts. The firm flies in teachers for employee training, and a strict code of conduct is enforced so that employees feel completely safe on the job.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Aruba is also becoming an active member of the community. The firm, in conjunction with AHATA, has committed itself to organizing three tourism-



related seminars each year. With six under its belt so far, the firm is planning its next seminar this January, but with a different slant. The planned seminar will feature guest speaker Duane Henders, who tirelessly works for Global Teen Challenge, a group of world-wide ministries that help drug addicts get clean. If the seminar is approved, Duane will share with interested parties how he has helped drug addicts find new lives in other countries so that Aruba can apply his methods on its own island.

AHATA is proud to honor PricewaterhouseCoopers with a 2007 Shoco Award of Excellence for all that it has done to serve the island's hospitality industry. Congratulations, and keep up the quality work! □

RBTT Bank employees give back to the community

## In the tradition of the bank families receive Christmas baskets



ORANJESTAD—Recently the committee 'RBTT Employees for the community' delivered Christmas baskets in line with the tradition of the committee.

The gift baskets were delivered to a number of families as they do every year during the year end season.

To pay for the baskets the committee held a Bake Sale in the month of November in their office in the Main Street in Oranjestad which turned out to be a great success.

Because of the success every year the RBTT committee promises to deliver even more in 2008. □

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# Sea Aruba Fly'n Dive wraps up successful IDC, instructor development course



ORANJESTAD – Owner John Oster joined the celebration at Havana Beach Club to congratulate new Padi certified dive instructors.



Course instructor Steve Vanderauwera from F&D was in charge of the curriculum, coaching 7 international students ranging in age from 27 to 68. It was an extensive program of 7 days, followed by 2 days of exam, 12 to 14 hours of physical exertion a day. Then an instructor from Padi headquarters in the USA oversaw the final exams. Congratulations to the new instructors, Jeffrey, from Holland, previous an IT man; Bas, from Holland, currently a sergeant with the Dutch Marines stationed in Aruba; Thomas, from Germany, a boat builder residing in Amsterdam who also loves windsurfing, a regular Aruba visitor; Ken, from the USA, another IT man, who comes several times a year to the island, whose goal is to help boy scouts from the USA enjoy diving; Canicio, from Aruba, a PE teacher for 3rd graders who loves diving, spear-fishing, kite surfing and all sports in general, who is very serious about protecting the environment, and the island's coral reefs. Mike, from Canada, 68 years old, fulfilling a long time dream, and Rafael, from Brazil, a physiotherapist, whose dream it was to travel and dive around the globe . . . □

# Double Celebration at CEI

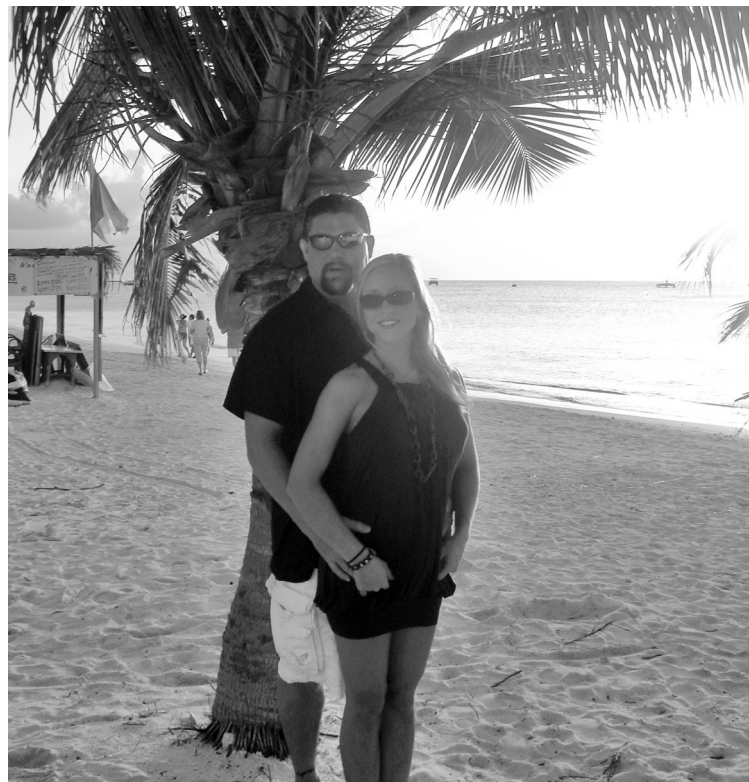
ORANJESTAD – Colombian Emeralds International was recently nominated to the Shoco award of excellence given by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association. At the same time Sales Associate Dayna Leon also received a Shoco Award nomination, to Allied Employee of the Year, finishing in the top three. It gave CEO Peter Allan, great pleasure to host a small gathering at the Colombian Emeralds store, at the Renaissance Mall in Oranjestad, celebrating the achievement of his team as a whole and also praising the individual accomplishment of Dayna Leon. Pictured here are store Manager Jeanette Keith together with CEO Peter Allen and their crew of glittering super stars. □





At MoomBa Beach

# Sisters celebrate engagement and marriage in Aruba

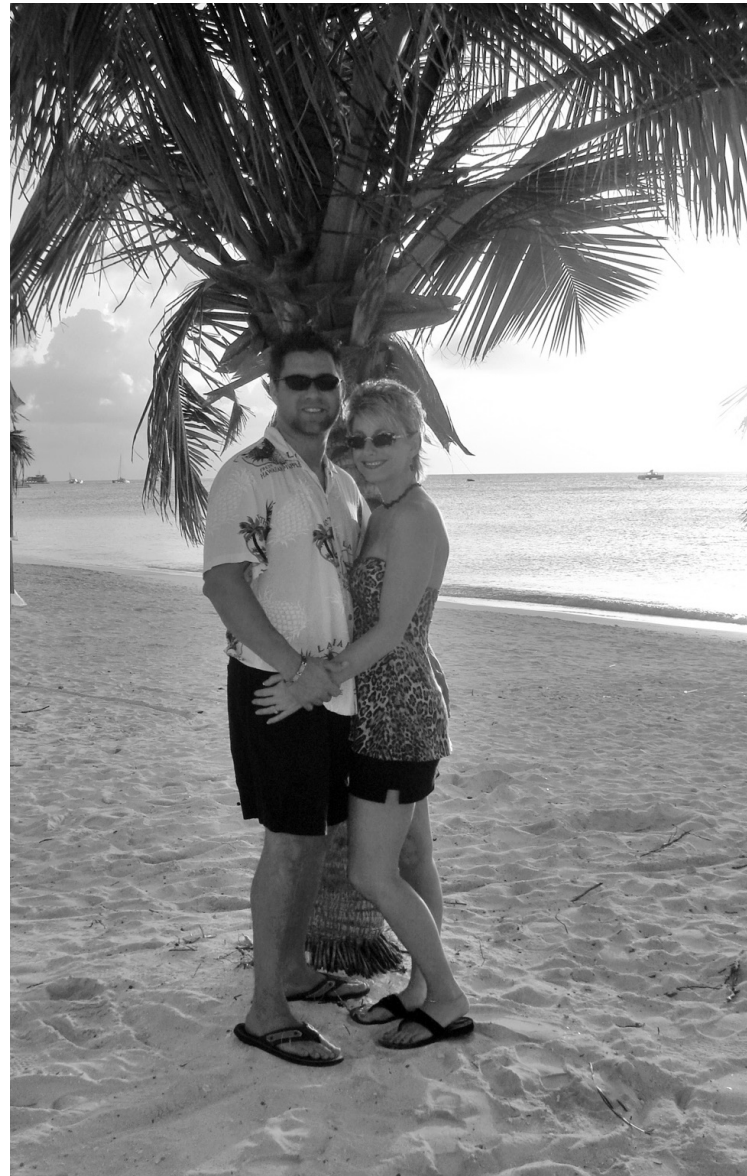


PALM BEACH – This week sisters Jessica and Michelle were in Aruba with their family to celebrate two occasions.

Simms Umberger and Jessica Milhorn got engaged on December 10th at the Moomba beach Restaurant which they celebrated with their family: Joe & Suzee Shuler and David & Michelle Reed.

Congratulations to Simms & Jessica.

Congratulations also go out to Jessica's sister Michelle who is in Aruba to celebrate her honeymoon. Michelle got married to David Reed on May 22, 2007 and waited to celebrate their honeymoon in Aruba. □



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# Quota Club enjoys holiday elegance at Windows on Aruba



EAGLE BEACH - A gorgeous holiday setting at the penthouse restaurant of the Links at Divi clubhouse, Windows on Aruba, was the location for the Quota Club's annual holiday party and dinner. Always in the process of planning or implemented their next fundraiser or informative event, the members of Aruba's chapter of Quota International take



this time of year to gather and enjoy each other's company.

Quota International, founded in 1919, deems it, "an international service organization that links members of all ages, occupations, and nationalities in a worldwide network of service and friendship. "With a motto of 'we share,' Quotarians are known especially for their service to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech-impaired individuals and disadvantaged women and children. Quota members share the values of serving and encouraging others, developing friendships, and promoting international understanding." The Aruba chapter has held several successful fundraisers over the years to support the local charitable efforts of the organization. □



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# Tierra del Sol celebrates holidays in grand gala style



ORANJESTAD - This week, the staff and management of Tierra del Sol Resort, Spa & Country Club celebrated their annual holiday party at Renaissance Resort's Seaport Conference Center. This is a special event that everyone looks forward to-as all departments have the chance to come together in a festive atmosphere, dressed in all their holiday finery for an evening of great food and fun. Live music and dancing was

provided by popular local band Tsunami, while the Renaissance provided their partners in tourism with island hospitality and an amazing

holiday feast. it was the perfect evening and a great way to energize the Tierra del Sol team for the coming busy high season. □





# Traditional houses at Sero Preto illuminated once again



**SAN NICOLAS** – It has become quite the tradition for the community of Sero Preto to come together and decorate the 'Christmas village' with an abundance of lights. The organization which is in charge of the decoration is the Hubentud Uni di Sero Preto (United Youth of Sero Preto)

who chose six important people of the Aruban community to participate in turning on the light. The theme for 2007 was the culture of Aruba it was an easy choice to pick Padu del Caribe, the composer of the national anthem of Aruba, to take the final honor to turn the

lights on. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday local musicians will play traditional Christmas songs as well as the local music for the time of the year called Gaita and Aguinaldo. They will be playing from 8pm till 10pm all three nights. □

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# 2007 Toys for Tots

**The Holiday Season is a time for giving, and you can help make it a very special holiday for families and children in need on Aruba.**

Just bring a new, unwrapped toy or books to the offices of Aruba Today & Bon Día Aruba, located at Weststraat 22, Oranjestad, and the good elves at Caribbean Speed Printers N.V. will wrap and deliver the toys in time for the holidays.

Monetary gifts will be accepted as well, with all proceeds going towards the purchase of toys for families and children in need. Donations will be accepted until the December 15, 2007.

Toys for Tots will also accept donations of non-perishable food items, and the good elves at Caribbean Speed Printers N.V. will make grocery bags to be distributed to families in need, especially those affected by the recently floods.

Visiting the island and not sure how to find us to make a donation? Give us a call at 582-7800 during regular business hours and ask for the "Toys for Tots" department, and we will come to you at your resort.

The Toys for Tots program would like to thank everyone in the community of Aruba for helping to make this special project possible, including generous support from the following sponsors:

*Masha Danki*

BON DIA *Aruba*

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# Year-end get-together for the Visibility Team



EAGLE BEACH - General Manager Jan Van Nes from Playa Linda, the volunteer at the helm of the Aruba Hospitality & Security Foundation (AH&SF) addressed members of the Visibility Team at the MVC the Dutch Marine Vacation Club on Eagle Beach during a casual year-end get-together organized by Darlene Birsby, Liaison of the AH& SF. Van Nes thanked the Visibility Team members for their many contributions to the island's safety and security and wished them a Merry Christmas and a prosperous, healthy New Year.

In June of 2001, as part of an Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association initiative, the AH&SF was founded. A year and a half later, in the month of December 2002, the VT, Visibility Team was born.

During these past five years the VT's effort to patrol tourist areas expanded and it presently covers the high and low rise hotel areas, down town Oranjestad, San Nicolas, as well as a VT presence around the island's waters.

The VT has become a trusted partner of the Police, featuring both uniformed officers and private security guards, patrolling on foot, bicycle, quadricer and in cars.

Neighboring countries have also shown interest in the Aruba model of the VT. Several countries have asked the AH&SF to give presentations and last week one of the board members upon request of the Minister of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands Antilles, gave a presentation in Bonaire.

The non-alcoholic gathering at MCV was also attended by AH&SF board members retired Police official Roland Peterson and hotelier Jurgen Van Schaijk as well as the VT's active and retired Police Chiefs.

You are invited to visit: [www.arubasecurityfoundation.org](http://www.arubasecurityfoundation.org) browse or even make a donation on the website. □



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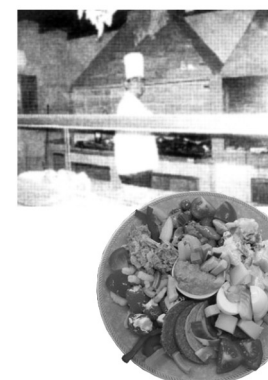
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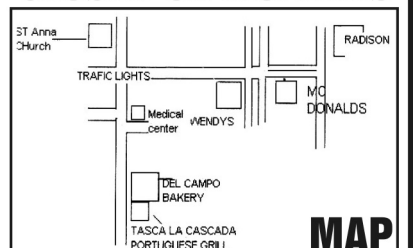
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**MAP**



# "Deck the hall with boughs of holly; 'T is the season to be jolly"



SAVANETA – The Clown Doctors were helped by kids of special needs of Scol Dunuman with teacher Jacqueline, when they decorated six trees at Marie Stella, the old folk's home in Savaneta. Pictured here are snapshots of the event, as the kids and the clowns joined hands to cheer up the elderly, often infirmed, residents of Marie Stella.

Flora Market, who is the main sponsor for the Clown Doctor activities, sponsored the decorations.

The Clown Doctors, who belong to a not for profit organization, visit ailing children in the hospital and also cheer up the elderly at Marie Stella. Last year they added children of special needs to the list of friends visiting Scol Dunuman regularly as well as the foster homes for little kids Casa Cuna.

The Clown Doctors totally rely on donations and every year they collect funds in the large supermarkets in Eagle on December 22 & 23. Please contribute when you see their red noses. ☐





# Classified

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SAN NICOLAAS

Dr. Luchmun

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Botica Trupial

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Sta. Cruz	585-4710
Savaneta	584-7000
San Nicolas	584-5000

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Brandweer	115
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Tipline di Polis	11141
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BGD Oranjestad	582-8877

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48	204	Stu	O/V	\$ 5,000.00
46	416	2bdr	P/O	\$ 14,000.00
48	505	1bdr	O/V	\$ 8,000.00

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**RIU Palace**

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**PARADISE BEACH VILLAS**

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49	424	1BDR	P/O	\$ 7,500.00
48/49	314	1BDR	G/V	\$ 11,000.00 both weeks
50	217A	2BDR	P/O	\$ 10,000.00
49	103	1BDR	P/V	\$ 8,000.00

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49	209B	STU	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
50	137C	1BDR	O/V	\$ 5,000.00
48	307C	1BDR	O/V	\$ 5,000.00
49	409B	STU	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
50	138C	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00
49/50	118A	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00 each
45	314C	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00
49	336A	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00
45	416A	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00
46	215C	1BDR	O/V	\$ 5,000.00
48	430C	1BDR	P/O	\$ 5,000.00
50/51	414B/C	2BDR	P/O	\$ 30,000.00 both weeks
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50	227A	1BDR	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
47	237B	STU	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
48	109B	STU	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
49	209B	STU	O/V	\$ 4,000.00
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Según justicia de Estados Unidos

# Maleta con 800 mil dólares era para campaña di presidenta Fernández

Gobierno argentino calificó de “canallada” la acusación

BUENOS AIRES (Reuters) - El Gobierno argentino calificó el jueves de “canallada” la afirmación de la justicia de Estados Unidos de que los casi 800.000 dólares ingresados ilegalmente este año al país sudamericano por un empresario venezolano eran para la campaña de Cristina Fernández.

Estados Unidos arrestó el miércoles a tres venezolanos

y un uruguayo, acusados de actuar como agentes no declarados de Venezuela, y la demanda dijo que los detenidos se reunieron con el empresario Guido Antonini para que ingrese el dinero a Argentina y oculte así a los reales aportantes a la campaña.

El fiscal federal adjunto de Estados Unidos Tom Mulvihill dijo el miércoles, según fue

citado por el diario argentino La Nación, que el dinero era para “la campaña de Cristina Kirchner.” Argentina y Venezuela mantienen estrechas relaciones y el presidente del país caribeño, Hugo Chávez, mostró abiertamente su apoyo a la ex candidata oficialista y ahora presidenta.

Antonini ingresó al país con una maleta repleta de dinero no declarado en agosto -en

plena campaña electoral-, en un avión rentado por el Estado argentino para trasladar funcionarios de Argentina y Venezuela desde Caracas a Buenos Aires.

Pero fue detenido por las autoridades argentinas al llegar.

“Cuando este señor quiere entrar a Argentina quien lo detiene es el Estado argentino (...) Se le hace dejar el dinero según dice el Código Aduanero,” dijo a Radio 10 el ministro de Justicia, Aníbal Fernández.

“Aparece esta expresión que lo que pretende, esto no es inocente, es enlodar al Gobierno argentino, o (enlodarlo) por la presencia de Chávez en Argentina (...) Pero que tiene características de ser una canallada fenomenal que pretende enlodar a la presidenta, no me cabe ninguna duda,” agregó.

Finalmente, haciendo referencia a que Antonini llegó a Buenos Aires un día antes de una visita de Chávez al país, dijo: “Si el objetivo era entrar una valija con dinero, entraba al otro día en el avión de Chávez y nadie se daba cuenta.”

Chávez mantiene un abierto

enfrentamiento con Estados Unidos y ha realizado masivos actos en Buenos Aires repudiando la política exterior del presidente estadounidense, George W. Bush.

El miércoles, tras las detenciones y la difusión de la demanda, el canciller venezolano, Nicolás Maduro, afirmó que la medida develaba que Estados Unidos estaba, desde el principio, detrás de todo el caso de la maleta.

La presidenta Cristina Fernández dijo el jueves que “no se dejará presionar” por “operaciones basura” en las relaciones internacionales, al aludir a la denuncia de un fiscal de Miami, en el sentido de que los 800.000 dólares secuestrados por la aduana argentina el 4 de agosto al empresario venezolano-estadounidense Alejandro Antonini Wilson, estaban destinados a financiar su reciente campaña electoral.

“Esta presidenta es mujer, pero no se va a dejar presionar”, declaró la mandataria, que asumió su cargo el lunes, reiterando su propósito de estrechar relaciones “con la República Bolivariana de Venezuela” y otros países de la región. □

## Serie de sismos en el norte de Chile sin causar daños ni víctimas



(ARCHIVO) Casas devastadas por el terremoto de 7,7 grados de magnitud escala de Richter que sacudió Tocopilla, unos 1.600 km al norte de Santiago, el 15 de noviembre de 2007. Una serie de fuertes terremotos de 6,0, 5,3 y 6,2, según la escala de magnitud de momento, sacudió el norte de Antofagasta, en la costa de Chile, a primeras horas del 13 de diciembre, según el Instituto Geológico de Vigilancia de Estados Unidos (USGS). Foto:Francesco Degasper/AFP

SANTIAGO (AFP) - Una serie de sismos menores azotó la madrugada de este jueves el norte de Chile, sin que se reportaran víctimas ni daños, según la Oficina Nacional de Emergencias (Onemi).

La Onemi informó que dos sismos de escasa intensidad afectaron de madrugada a la región de Antofagasta, a unos 1.200 km al norte de Santiago, en el mismo lugar afectado por un terremoto el 14 de noviembre.

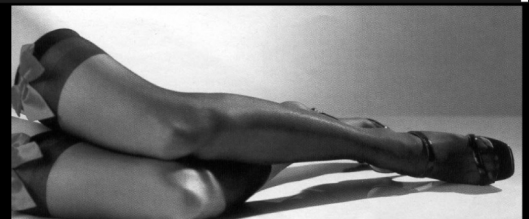
El primer movimiento se percibió a las 02H35 horas locales (05H35 GMT), con una intensidad en su epicentro 4,9 grados en la escala de Richter, mientras que el segundo

ocurrió a las 04H24 locales (07H24 GMT), con una intensidad de 5,6 grados, según el Departamento de Sismología de la Universidad de Chile.

La ONEMI agregó que en ambos casos “no se reportaron desgracias personales ni daños materiales”. Un reporte del Instituto Geológico de Vigilancia de Estados Unidos (USGS) señaló que el primer sismo tuvo una magnitud de 6,0 en la escala de momento, mientras que el del segundo fue de 6,2.

El USGG agregó que hubo un tercer sismo en la zona a las 05H40 GMT, de una magnitud de 5,2 grados. □

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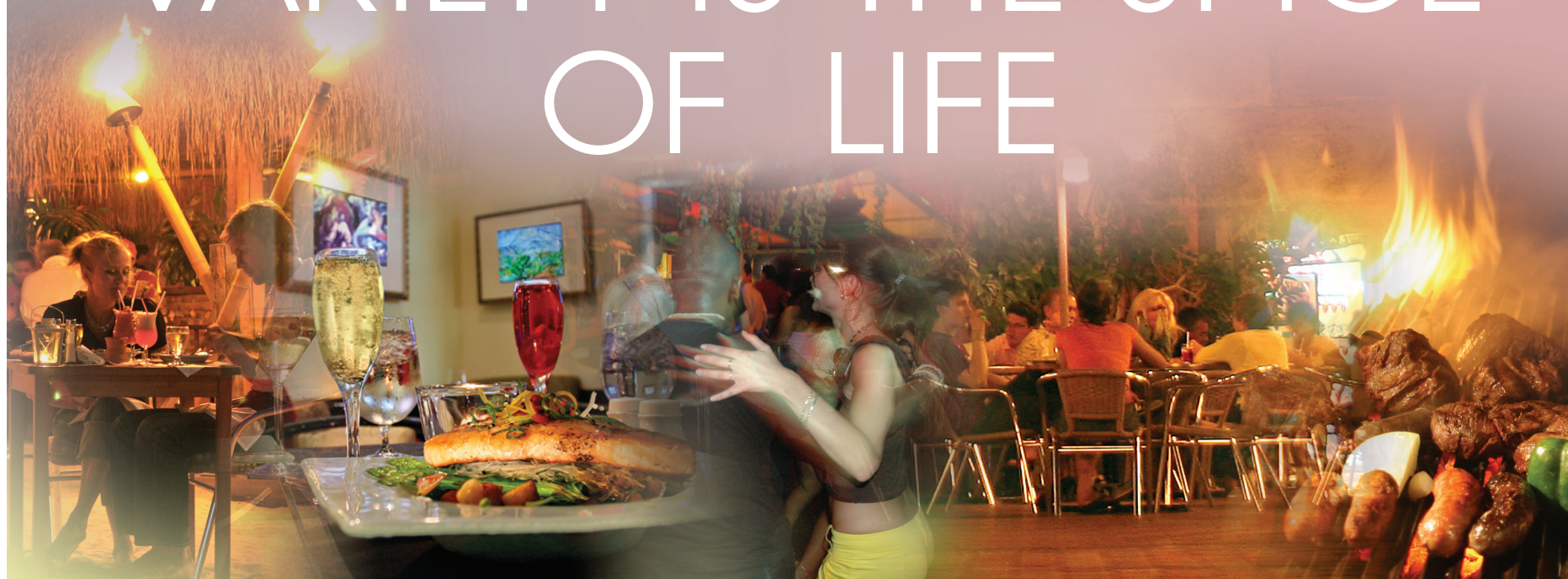


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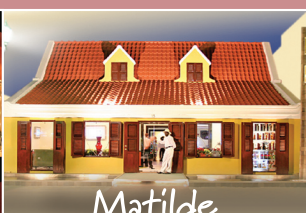
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